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NCW  
E. Billin







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**WOULD** you know the baby's skies?

❖ Baby's skies are mother's eyes.  
Mother's eyes and smile together  
Make the baby's pleasant weather.

Mother, keep your eyes from tears,  
Keep your heart from foolish fears,  
Keep your lips from dull complaining,  
Lest the baby think 't is raining.

—*Mary C. Bartlett.*

M. C.  
B.





# A REDMAN *of* QUALITY

BY

*Edward Everett Billings*

Author of "MARKING THE BOUNDARY," etc.

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ILLUSTRATED

AKRON, OHIO

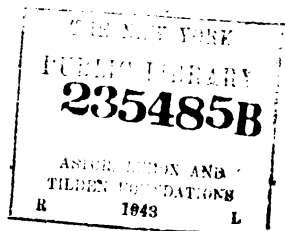
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Wickett 13 Apr



## CHAPTER I

"What's the matter? What is it? What do you see, Obad?" cried Leon.

"Don't make sich er racket! That's Sherman's Lake right agin us, an' if ye meet a right an' sharp ye can git us er hit er bust head!" whispered Obadiah, drawing a very long breath and pointing to an object in the distance. Obadiah usually confined himself to the succinctness of sentences, as a bullet from the gun of a treacherous Modoc Indian had done when a hole through his lungs, and ever since his articulation had been a source of trouble to him.

"Well, I declare! Is that the Lake?" asked Leon, looking as Obadiah had directed.

"Why, I've seen that for the last ten minutes, and thought it was another of those confusing mirages," exclaimed Percy, leaning forward on the pommel of his saddle.

"Wall! it aint no mirage nor nuthin' but Sherman's Lake as I'm tellin' ye, an' right the way I'm pintin' thar's er bunch o' antelope!" A few

gasps, and Obadiah continued: "They've had er drink an' air browsin' about fur er bit o' green stuff, can't ye see 'em?"

"Yes, yes, now I see them! Which way shall we go first?" asked Leon, excitedly.

"Well, fust go slow an' not git ther fever afore ye git within range o' them critters— If ye was ter tie yer hosses ter that thar wagon wheel an' walk down that thar coulee, it 'ud hide ye till ye git up to 'em," replied Obadiah, gasping for breath after these many words.

Obadiah, the guide, was known as a great hunter and Indian fighter throughout Wyoming.

"All right, Obed, that's the way we'll work it. We'll have an antelope for dinner, eh, Percy?" said Leon to his comrade, who was already tying his horse to the hind wheel of the large Murphy wagon.

"Don't be too sure, my boys, you must first kill your antelope and then cook him," interposed Prof. Garceau, the geologist, in charge of the small party of adventurers.

"All I ask is a shot inside of two hundred

J. G. V. H.

yards," replied Leon, with a superabundance of confidence in his marksmanship.

The antelope must have been at least a mile distant, which necessitated quite a walk down and along the low depression spoken of by Obadiah as a coulee.

The walk, the crawling through the grass, and the sudden finding of themselves in the immediate vicinity of a bunch of antelope for the first time in their lives, was all very exciting to the boys.

Percy had remained near the top of a small hill, whilst Leon crept farther along the bottom of the coulee. The latter was now within easy shot of the antelope, but his hand was shaking so that he feared to chance a shot. He thought of waiting for this to pass away, but the more he looked at the antelope the more violently did the blood go coursing through his veins. He must do the best he could, and do it at once. One buck, more restless than the others, stretched his slender throat and gave forth a weird, peculiar cry:

"Brrr up! Brrr up!"



It must be now or never, and holding his breath to give added steadiness to his arm, Leon raised his rifle and brought the sights to bear upon the buck, the noblest of them all.

Bang! rang out the rifle, and Leon sprang to his feet, throwing in another cartridge as he did so.

Away flew the antelope like the wind, and again rang out the rifle: Bang! Bang! Bang! but no dead antelope lay bleeding on the prairie as a result. The buck Leon had thought to kill was far in the lead, but he was going on three legs!

Meanwhile Percy, left to himself, lay stretched on the ground, idly watching some white objects out on the lake. Then he heard the report of a rifle, then three more shots.

"Hurrah!" shouted Percy, "Leon's got one!" And he rose quickly and ran in the direction of the sound. As he reached the higher ground, an antelope came flying directly towards him, so close that, although the animal immediately changed its course, it presented a broad side in easy range. Taking a cool and deliberate aim,

Percy pulled the trigger, and over rolled the antelope!

Leon came running up.

"Oh, you've got one! You're in luck!" he cried.

"But I'm not sure I would have gotten him if you hadn't broken his leg."

"Nonsense! he was going faster on three legs than the others on four."

"Well, it'll be your turn next time. There's a good deal in luck anyway."

"And more in a steady hand. Mine was shaking, I'll have to confess, when I found myself so close to that bunch of antelope. I was a little excited, first time you know, I'm sure it will not happen again."

"I don't wonder. You see I had no time to think, to say nothing of getting excited. But, come on, Leon, we must dress this fellow. You pull him over, and I'll manage him. My hands are all blood and there's no need of your getting in it," said Percy, and, with but little awkwardness for novices, they performed the necessary operation.

"Well, Percy, we must get on, they will think we are lost," said Leon.

"Yes, but isn't he just a beauty?"

"That's what he is!" answered Leon enthusiastically, and with one parting look at their prize, the boys started back to the wagons, where they found Prof. Garceau anxiously awaiting them.

"Antelope steak for dinner!" shouted Leon, as they came near.

"Ah, you got one, did you, Leon? We heard you shooting," said the professor, looking with pride at his handsome son.

"Well, I broke one's leg and Percy downed him on the run," replied Leon.

"So Percy was the lucky fellow? Well, good for you Percy, it will help us out immensely. I'm getting heartily tired of bacon, for one," responded the professor, as he climbed into the wagon and directed Obadiah to follow the boys to where they had left the game.

"A fine specimen, indeed!" announced Prof. Garceau.

"Purty fair eatin', I allow, but we'll git

better'n that when we git inter the mountings," said Obadiah, again starting up his team and heading for the shores of the lake.

"The country here looks much different from that we have been traveling over," remarked Percy, after the tents had been raised and the camp-stools brought out and placed in the small strip of shade thus afforded.

Percy Randall was an observant boy, and Prof. Garceau had been so pleased with his son's choice of a friend, that he had invited him to accompany them in the search for a sapphire deposit of great value, but of very uncertain location.

"You are right, my boy, this is more of a volcanic formation, whilst that which we have been traveling over is mostly floored by Tertiary and Cretaceous formations. We are approaching the foot-hills where we will find evidences of more or less volcanic action in a comparatively recent geological period," replied the professor.

"Do you think we will see any volcanoes on our trip?" asked Leon.

"No, but we may find hot springs."

"That's what I want to see," said Percy.

"The wonders of Nature are many; man cannot understand the smallest of them. The Almighty allows us to probe, to examine, to conjecture. We build our theories, we pull things to pieces, as a child breaks the delicate mechanism of a watch, but not one particle can we destroy."

"That does seem strange."

"Yes; but all things may be made of use to man. Even such small things as the rare and precious stones, have a use beyond the adornment of the person."

"They turn out pretty good imitations nowadays."

"Not where hardness is the desired object. The diamond is the hardest known substance, the sapphire grading next."

"Are those stones that Chief Joseph gave General Miles the same kind of sapphires that are cut and worn in jewelry?" asked Leon.

"Yes, indeed, and some of them are of the first water and remarkably beautiful."

"But how are they found, in the solid rock?"

"Oh, no, on the contrary they are found in alluvial deposits, the same as gold dust. Now look at these," and the professor took from an inner pocket a buckskin pouch, from which, after carefully mixing it, he poured out a number of small stones.

"Oh, did you bring them all with you?" cried Percy.

"No, only a few of them to compare with those we may find."

"What pretty things they are!"

"These are very fine stones, see how perfect the crystalline structure after having been in contact with sand and gravel for countless ages. All perfect sapphires should be like these, or nearly so, with six sides, and on all perfect stones there should show this little triangle on one of the faces. It shows the crystalline formation and should be on all sapphires."

"Why it's raised, or looks so, on this stone," cried Leon, examining one of them.

"All do not show it so plainly, but most of them have it."

"These stones are not all the same color."

"The color varies greatly, the most valuable being of a faint bluish grey tint hard to describe. These are mostly of a sea-green tint that will cut into very pretty stones," said the professor, taking up the gems. "After all, it depends on the cutting. Not one in ten will cut to any value, though only a lapidary can tell that."

"But how did that Indian get all these stones?" asked Leon.

Here the conversation was interrupted by Pete, who called them to dinner.

Pete with a white apron, was slightly in advance of the usual frontier cook, and the antelope steaks, cooked to perfection, were pronounced better even than anticipated.

After the dinner, a very late one, had been finished, Leon asked:

"I say, Obed, aren't those white things out on the lake, swans?"

"Reckon they be," answered Obadiah, glancing upon the waters that came rippling up on the pebbly beach.

"Well, what's the matter with trying to get one?"

"Nothin' as I knows on, 'cept ye can't, an if ye killed one ye wouldn't get it, an if ye got it ye couldn't eat it."

"Not eat it! Well, I think we could. Why, man alive, they used to be considered a great delicacy by the ancients," said Leon grandiloquently.

"Mebbe, an' if them ar' ancients want er chaw on one er them ye see out thar they jest kin, I don't."

"Why, are they as bad as all that? What are they like?" asked Percy.

"I'll tell ye what ninety-nine out of er hundred is like, an' that's er chunk er tough beef, an' wuss," answered Obadiah.

"Ha! ha! well, Obed, I don't think I want to eat them, but I'd like to kill a few for feathers; we could stuff some pillows very easily, if you could only think of a way for us to get at them. It must be all of half a mile out there," said Percy, who had now finished preparing his antelope's head for the taxidermist.



"No trick ter knock er few, if ye wait till dark. Thar's er bit o' swamp beyond that ar pint, whar they'll sneak in erbout dark ter feed."

"Is that so? What do you say, Leon, if we walk over there and have a shy at them when they come in?" suggested Percy.

"I'm with you every time. If we could kill a half dozen or so, what pillows we'd have. I tell you I'm tired of sleeping with my coat rolled up under my head."

These two boys, "out West" for the first time, found a charm in every novelty. They had read many tales of the big game found in the Rockies and their foot-hills, and now that they had the good fortune to be able to hunt there, they felt inclined to lose no chance for sport.

"Don't you want to go, Obed?" asked Percy.

"No, I reckon not, I aint much stuck on walkin' four or five miles ter wrastle with er lot o' pesky swans. Mebbe though ye mought git er goose among 'em. If ye do git er chance at er goose, boys, do yer best!"

"You'd better join us, a lineal descendant of

the renowned Daniel should never refuse a chance for a shot at anything," said Percy, with a laugh. Obadiah's surname was Boone.

"I say, Obed, are you really a descendant of Daniel Boone?" asked Leon.

"Thet's what I've been allers told, an' I think it's true fur I'm never no count 'cept ter pack er gun an' foller er dog after game."


The boys laughed heartily as they struck out along the shore.

The day had been exceedingly warm, and as often happens, gave promise of being followed by a storm.

Soon the boys reached a prominent ridge that terminated in a point extending out into the lake.

Stretched before them lay a number of small lakes and ponds, most of which were densely fringed with wild rye. In these and flying from one to another of them, were flocks of swans, geese and ducks in numbers that would have satisfied the most ardent sportsman.

"I'll tell you, you go around this first little lake one way, and I'll go the other, and one of us will get a shot," said Percy.



"All right, and we'll meet on the other side," replied Leon, and they separated.

The wild rye grew thick, making a good shield for a hunter, and Leon struggled on. He was about concluding that his chance for a successful shot would be small, when he came upon a small pond opening out of the lake. Along the shores it was literally covered with wild-fowl, while in the centre, swimming about with royal grace, were two or three large flocks of snow-white swans. There were geese about a hundred yards from Leon, and had he taken careful aim at one solitary goose that goose would most likely have been stuffed, roasted and eaten for their next day's dinner, but one goose when there were so many! Leon hesitated.

Now a wild-geese is one of the wariest of birds, and the most difficult to approach, notwithstanding its reputation for lack of sense.

Leon had never seen such a sight, never dreamed there could be such numbers of water-fowl on one small pond. He looked about him. There was something uncanny in it all. The

dark, angry masses of clouds from the north, were rolling down and closing in as if they would sweep the earth. The sun was soon covered and the blue sky above assumed a dusty grey that was in harmony and tone with the surroundings. Realizing that whatever he did must be done without further delay, Leon ran to the water's edge, but the water-fowl were already leaving it. With one accord they raised themselves for flight. They rose like a swarm of bees disturbed at the hive, and the flapping of a myriad of wings, the honking of geese, quacking of ducks and the flute-like notes of the swans, commingled to make an almost deafening noise.

Leon raised his rifle and sent shot after shot through what appeared a solid mass of flying birds, but all that fell as the result of the expended ammunition, was one small mud-hen, and even that was pounced upon by the angry gulls, before Leon could secure it.

"Well," soliloquized Leon, "that's even worse than I did with the antelope. Confound it all! who would believe that I could fire a dozen

shots into that mass of animated feathers, and only drop a poor, miserable mud-hen, and not even get that?"

He walked on, swallowing his disappointment as best he could and struggling against a feeling hard to contend with, a desire that Percy might be equally unfortunate.

Soon he came to a narrow slough, that connected the pond with the lake, and which he found he must cross. It looked muddy and uninviting, yet the storm was settling down and he had not time to go around.

Already he felt an occasional drop of rain. Flashes of lightning tinted the edges of inky-looking clouds, and zigzag chains of electricity rent them in twain, followed by deafening roars of thunder, that were like a continuous discharge of artillery.

Clearly there was no time to lose, and sitting down in the grass, Leon pulled off his shoes and stockings, and rolled up his trousers well above the knees. Tying his shoes together he slung them about his neck, and strapping his rifle to his back he scrambled down into the slough.

He found the water about a foot deep, with a like depth of slimy mud. The slough was not more than twenty feet wide, but the soft ooze at the bottom made it difficult to cross. Pushing his way through the tall grass that grew thick at the banks, Leon stumbled upon an immense white swan! Surprised, and nonplused, his rifle being securely strapped to his back, his only thought was to spring upon the great bird and grasp it in his arms; but the bird as ready as he, beat him off with its wings, and hastily unstrapping his rifle, he sent a shot at it. He was, however, so close, that the only effect was a handful of feathers thrown in the air. On plunged the swan, closely pursued by Leon, the mud and water splashed about, and the tall grass crushed by the wild endeavors of the bird to get out of sight. That it could not fly was evident, and it must have had a wing broken, and fluttered down into the slough. Notwithstanding the rain, which was now falling in torrents, Leon, plunged on, wild with desire to possess the retreating swan.

He could not shoot it, but he clubbed his rifle

and was about to use it, thinking to further disable the bird, when he remembered his knife. Dropping his rifle he grasped the enraged bird by the long neck, as it turned upon him, and drew his knife from its scabbard. As he struck at the swan, it brought its uninjured wing down upon his head with a powerful blow that staggered him, and in trying to recover himself he tripped and fell at full length in the water!

## CHAPTER II.

Leon underneath, holding on with bull-dog tenacity, his mouth and eyes filled with muddy water, found the sudden plunge far from agreeable, but he fought blindly on, using his knife till at last he found the swan weakening, and gained his feet in time to see his valiant foe fall dead, after one final struggle. A dearly bought victory when Leon considered the plight it left him in.

He picked up his rifle, jammed his soaked hat well down on his head, and laughed.

"I got you, anyway, wonder if Percy did as well."

Then he caught the dead swan firmly by the neck, and clambered out on the opposite bank.

The rain had ceased, the clouds were breaking, but the sun had set and it was necessary for him to hasten. He had not gone far when he met Percy.

"Well, for goodness sake, Leon, have you been in the lake?" exclaimed the latter.



"Something like it; I wounded this fellow, and had a fight to get him; what luck have you had?"

"Oh, I killed two geese, but this grand bird, how did you manage to get it? What a monster, and how white! nothing black about him but his beak and feet. Did you have a time getting him? You look pretty rocky for a fact."

"Time! Look at my forehead where the brute struck me! When I got him cornered he fought like a savage, and nearly drowned me besides, but he couldn't make me let go. If you think I didn't have my hands full you're wrong."

"Ha! ha! a chapter of accidents! I only got a couple of shots in before they got too far out to reach."

"Well, we must be getting on, it will soon be dark, and we might lose our way."

"Not much danger of that, all we have to do is to follow the shore till we reach camp. Let me take that fellow awhile and you carry the geese."

When they reached camp it was already dark, but though tired, they could not regret the novel hunt.

The next day Obadiah asked the professor: "Ef ye don't objec' I'd jest like to borrow yer field glasses fur a minute."

"Why, certainly; Leon, go inside my tent and find my glasses, and bring them out to Obadiah, like a good lad."

"Ef I ain't mistaken, that's somethin' moughty queer out on that point, an' I've been watchin' it fur more'n an hour, an' it's moved quite er bit."

"A coyote, most likely," said Prof. Garret, carelessly, looking in the direction indicated by Obadiah.

"Yes, that's what it is," asserted Leon, handing Obadiah the glasses.

"Don't ye be too fast, ye better saw in before as looked taller when he moved. Thoug' he mought raise up a little when he's standin' still. This thing's taller when he's movin'." said Obadiah, taking the glasses from the eyes and handing them to Prof. Garret.

"See what ye make out o' that. How ye get sight o' that dark objec'?"

"Yes, I see what you refer to, but I can't say

I see it move. What do you think it is? can't you tell with the glasses?" asked the professor, changing the focus slightly, to fit his eyes.

"I'm sure it's a human critter o' some kind, but I can't make out why it's monkeyin' about that way fur."

"Yes, you are right, it is a human being, it's a man over there most surely, but what is he doing? As you say his actions are most extraordinary."

"Oh, let me look," cried Leon, taking hold of the glasses.

"What do you see?" asked Percy coming up with Pete.

"That's an Injun, I can tell that with my eyes alone. What's the beggar doin' out there?" asked Pete, stepping on a cracker box and shading his eyes with his hat from the powerful rays of the sun.

"It's jest what I sized him up ter be, but who ever seed er Injun prowlin' erfoot an' erlone?" responded Obadiah.

"That's right, there's something queer about him; crazy maybe," suggested Pete.

"Sure enough, a crazy Shoshone! He hadn't better come foolin' round here, we'll knock him in the head an' pitch the cuss inter the lake ef he does," said Obadiah, solemnly.

"What! why, Obed, one would not want to hurt a crazy Indian, but do you feel sure that he is not up to some kind of mischief?" asked Percy.

"You said the few Indians we might chance to meet would be kindly disposed?" and Prof. Garceau looked anxious.

"Oh, them Shoshones is allers friendly, they haint cut up none sence the Nez Perces went through this part o' Wyoming some time ago. I reckon I'll go over thar'n see what kind o' medicine that thar chap's makin'," said Obadiah, wheezing considerably.

"I'll go with you," cried Leon.

"And I, too," chimed in Percy.

"Better get your gun," suggested Pete.

"Your sword and pistol!" laughed Percy.

"It may be as well that you all go, and see what that fellow is doing," said the professor.

"Shall we go on foot or do you want the saddle horses, Obed?" asked Percy.

"Suit yerself, my boy, it's very perlite though of ye ter leave it ter me, but then you air allers a perlite chap. Now, Percy, I never see er perliter one 'cept one," said Obadiah, with a suspicion of a grin under his grizzly moustache.

"And who was that?" inquired Leon, looking quizzically at Percy.

"Oh, a storekeeper down to Green River City. I see that thar chap kick er Chinaman outter his store one day, an' then jest from force o' habit take off his hat an' say, 'Call again, John, call agin.'"

"Ha! ha! ha! that's good, but about those horses, now don't you think we might need them?"

"Oh, I see what yer mean, case thar mought be more Injuns round, ye want ter git back ter camp double-quick, haint gittin' scart be ye?"

"Not much! Well, we'll walk on then, there's nothing to get frightened at that I can see."

"No, nuthin', only I can't jest make out what he's coonin' about fur, fust on all fours an' then on his hind legs, but I've got my shootin' iron handy, so come on," and Obadiah struck out

followed by the others, all feeling more or less excited.

Pror. Garceau, left alone, followed the little party with his field glasses.

The camp consisted of two small tents, commonly called dog tents, and two larger wall tents.

Prof. Garceau occupied one of the latter, and the two boys, one of the former, while the other was the cook tent and the remaining one was used by the two other members of the party.

They were set up, two facing the other two, with a wagon at either end, forming a small quadrangle.

Obadiah's lumbering gait was much in contrast with the sprightly steps of the others as they trod lightly along beside him.

To the boys there was a suggestion of mystery about it all that fired their imaginations; youth ever cares less for cause and effect than for the possibilities called up by a lively fancy.

"Do you really think he's crazy, Obed?" asked Leon, as he endeavored to keep step with Obed's rolling gait.

"I aint so sure now I've been thinkin' on't wait er bit till we git up ter him an' we'll know what's ther matter," replied Obed with man grunts.

"Maybe he's lost and starving, and diggin' for roots," suggested Leon.

"Oh, I hope not, it must be an awful thing to be as hungry as all that," said Percy.

"Hungry! what do ye know about bein' hungry? Ever go without yer dinner in yer lives?" asked Obadiah, with something like a sneer.

"Yes, I did once and I thought I should die," answered Leon with such emphasis that they all laughed.

"Were you ever very, very hungry, Obed?" asked Percy.

"Reckon I were an' more'n once. I remember as how once I missed four dinners an' never got no lunches in atwixt em."

"What! four days without eating?"

"That's what I said an' that's what I mean," said Obadiah, oracularly.

"I should think you would have starved to death. How did it feel, Obed?"

"Wall, the last part o' that thar fast were wuss nor ther fust part, cause I got weak like, but ther fust night I were ther hungriest."

"How did it all happen, Obed?" asked Lew.

"Too long er yarn ter tell when er feller's walkin', but I got out o' grub in ther mountings way up in ther Kootainai country," answered Obadiah, wheezing.

"If this poor fellow should prove to be in a like fix, we've forgotten to provide a mouthful for him?"

"I've got a flask of whiskey with me," said Pete, stepping along beside them. "The professor sent it."

"Why, bless yer heart, we haint so fur from camp as we'll hev ter bring him out his dinner."

"Look! what's he doing now?" cried Percy.

"Seems to be lying down."

"Reckon as how he's been sick an' ther tribe's gin him the cold shake."

This supposition of Obadiah's was based on personal experiences among the Shoshones, who when traveling, rather than be hampered by a sick member, will leave him behind to perish.



"I hope it is no contagious disease," said Leon, a little nervously.

"Jest as likely's not, he's down with ther small-pox," ventured Obidah, glancing slyly at Leon. Seeing his look of consternation, he continued: "Why, small-pox's nuthin' with Injuns. I were up in Montany onct, an' knew er hull tribe ter be down with it. They was Piegans an' Uncle Sam's troops cum erlong, an' killed ther hull outfit."

"Oh, look here, Obed, when you come to givin' it to us that strong, you know, why we can't swallow a bit of it. Draw it mild for us, can't you?" said Leon, indignantly.

"Now jest look er here, young feller, I'm givin' ye straight goods; that's no taffy, ther sojers was kermanded by Kernal Baker, an' he got orders ter clean up them Injuns, an' he did it! an' findin' 'em all dyin' o' small-pox, why the Government made er savin' o' ammunition an' sojer buttons. Them's all histor'cal facts, an' ye orter know 'em," said Obadiah, who had interrupted himself many times during his long speech to get breath.

"I'll have to look up the ~~crimes in~~ story, but, honest now, Obed, if the ~~thing~~ should have any such horrib' ~~things as small~~ pox, what would we do?" asked Leon.

"Wall ef he's travelin' in the ~~country~~ ye'll hev ter take keer o' him ~~when~~ ef he never hed none o' them ~~things~~ ~~trouble~~ in what's more I didn't ~~him~~ ~~out~~ ~~for~~ ~~no~~ ~~reason~~ nuss," said Obadiah with much ~~emphasis~~.

"But, good graces! Obed, if ~~he~~ ~~will~~ ~~that~~ are we to do? how are we to ~~him~~ ~~out~~ ~~with~~ the matter with him?"

"Hold er post ~~motion~~ ~~on~~ ~~that~~ ~~will~~ ~~him~~ ~~that~~ an' examine him ~~an' watch~~ ~~him~~ ~~for~~ ~~will~~ inter him from here ~~an'~~ ~~watch~~ ~~him~~ ~~out~~ it. I've got ter wipe out ~~every~~ ~~man~~ ~~an'~~ ~~every~~ critters yit afore I ~~go~~ ~~out~~." Obadiah spoke with a vehemence that told the boys he was not joking this time.

"But, Obed, that will ~~not~~ ~~do~~ ~~you~~ ~~know~~" said Leon.

"No," snarled Obadiah. "I ~~know~~ ~~in~~ ~~these~~ orders now, but ef I'd er been ~~alone~~ ~~in~~ ~~it~~ dropped that ~~that~~ ~~critter~~ ~~was~~ ~~in~~ ~~an'~~ ~~wasted~~ ~~no~~ ~~time~~ ~~er~~ ~~in~~ ~~it~~."

"Did you ever kill an Indian, Obed? honor bright now?" asked Leon.

"Did I ever kill an Injun? Great Lord! what er question! Did I ever kill an Injun? Wall now, that gits me. What am I comin' tu? Here's a real live Eastern boy as asks me ef I ever killed an Injun!" exclaimed Obadiah, his small supply of breath failing him.

"But did you, Obed?" insisted the boy.

"See here, young feller, I can't stand this, ye mought take me fur er tenderfoot, fac' now, ye mought er kornsidered me er dude, but knowin' I've put in more'n forty year amongst ther mountings an' prairies, ter ask me ef I've killed an Injun! It's too durn much!" gasped Obadiah, in tones that showed how greatly he was offended.

"I didn't mean any thing out of the way, I only thought I'd ask."

"No harm in askin', but ye'd orter know as how I've made many er score o' them wuthless cusses bite ther dust," said Obadiah, shifting his rifle to the other shoulder.

"But did you ever kill any sick ones, Obed?" asked Percy, dryly.

Then they walked on in silence for sometime when Obadiah, ignoring Percy's pertinent question, announced:

"That thar critter's on his feet agin, an he's er holdin' his hands up ter his head."

"I wonder what that's for?" cried Leon.

They were now in full sight of the stranger, and could plainly note his tall gaunt form, clad in breech cloth and leggings, with a loose blanket thrown over his shoulders.

"Keep still an' watch him," commanded Obadiah, taking his gun from his shoulder, and silently cocking it as he laid it on his left arm, his right hand conveniently near the trigger.

The Indian again crouched down and put his ear to the ground.

"Ha!" cried the guide, "it's as I thought, he's some old duffer as is too old ter be any use, an' as he'd no friends in his tribe, they've jest dropped him," said Obadiah in a low tone.

"But what does he put his ear to the ground for?" asked Percy, in a whisper.

"He has heard our footsteps and is too old to see, isn't that it, Obed?" asked Leon, solving the mystery.

"C'rect, my boy, the old duffer is blind," said Pete.

"Yes, he's blind ez er bat an' he's heard our footsteps, but can't place us perzac'ly," answered Obadiah, and then at the top of his voice, he shouted:

"Ho, thar! ye measly, lantern-jawed hoss-thief! turn yerself loose an' tell us who ye air!"

The Indian now raised both of his empty hands high above his head, and waved them significantly, which was evidently understood by his questioner, for he called again:

"Yes, I know ye're good Injun, o' course, but all ther good Injuns I ever see was deader'n door nails. What air ye, Crow?" and Obadiah raised his hand to the side of his head, giving it the motion of a bird's wing, as he called the tribal name, "or Gros Ventre?" and he described a semi-circle from his chin to his waist, "or Shoshone?" and he lowered his hand almost to the ground, giving it a serpentine motion; "wonder ef he's blind or only playin' it."

The Indian, lowering his hands, called back in clear tones, "Shoshone!" and squatted down again covering his eyes.

"Wall he's ther queerest snake as I ever see. An Injun allers calls back ter find out what ye air, after he's interdooosed himself. This chap acts queer, mebbly he is blind," said Obadiah.

"He acts as if the sun hurt his eyes," said Leon.

"I don't reckon as it does; come on, we'll hev er talk with him, I kin chin in his langwidge till ther cows come home."

"But, Obed, you—you don't think there's any danger of small-pox, do you?"

"Ha! ha! ha! how kin I tell ye till we hold ther post mortem? Come erlong, an' we'll all find out tergether."

They advanced to where the Indian sat silently awaiting them.

"Speak to him, Obed, if you can, I don't suppose he knows English," said Leon.

"You don't know anything about him, he may speak English as well as ourselves," said Percy, inclined to be suspicious of the silent Aborigine.

"That's whar yer right, Percy, ye don't want ter bank too heavy on them brutes not knowin'

English; o' course he'll purtend as how he don't, but I'll try him in our lingo fust. I say, old Striped-Blanket, did yer folks give yer ther grand bounce, eh? fire ye? tell ye ter roll yer blankets an' pull yer freight? eh? sabe? or is that too high-toned wordin' an' do ye want me ter come down ter pigeon English fur ye?"

"Yes, I understand you but too well; you are mistaken in your supposition," replied the Indian, in smooth musical tones, but without raising his face or changing his position.

"Wall, by ther great Horned Toad! but ye're er dandy! yes, er Jim dandy, an' no mistake; takin' it all in an' never offering' ter chip," said Obadiah, his face broadening with astonishment, and his eyes opening to their fullest extent.

"I told you I would not be surprised if he spoke English," whispered Percy.

"I'm not so took back that this here feller knows it, but what gits me is that he owns up," said Obadiah, much puzzled. Meanwhile the Indian sat immovable, his hands covering his eyes.

"Wall, old Cut-the-Hobbles, yer peepers is played out an' ye're out o' luck all round, eh? Pity ye wasn't all born that thar way, an' less meanness ye'd hev ter account fur." said Obadiah renewing the attack.

"Come, come, Obed, you forget he understands you. He has feelings as well as yourself," said Percy.

"Wall, then, old Hide-ye-Face, seein' as how ye kin chin our lingo so durn well, give an account o' yerself an' say who ye air an' how long ye hev been blind."

"I am not blind, you are mistaken," said the Indian, rising and standing erect.



## CHAPTER III.

The Indian removed a cloth that was bound about his head, disclosing a pair of bloodshot eyes, as he added:

"Only snow-blind!"

The glare of the sun in his face must have been an exquisite torture, yet he bore it stoically, though the alleviating tears ran down his cheeks.

"How very singular to be snow-blind in June!" said Leon.

"That's jest it, how could he git snow-blind 'thout bein' whar thar's snow?" and Obadiah looked at the boys with a smile which hinted at his own perspicacity.

"And how do you account for the fact that he uses such very good English?"

"Yes," said Percy; "I thought his first words ought to be, 'Me big chief! Take heap scalp!' but he's got nothing like a scalp about him, and he can't be old, his skin is as smooth as mine."

"Wall, this is about ther most puzzlin'ist case

I ever see. I never tried no post mortems, but I don't believe nobody can't do no good job 'thout killin' ther man fust."

"If you will let me speak with him alone I think I can find out all about him," suggested Percy.

"Jest ez ye say, I'm dumb ez er one-eyed oyster, ef ye want ter talk ter ther brute, fire away," said Obadiah, bringing his teeth together with a snap, and turning his back on them all.

Percy walked over to the young Indian, who all this time had remained apparently oblivious of their very existence.

"I say, my friend," he said kindly, "you seem to have been unfortunate, what can we do to help you?"

"Nothing, only let me alone," answered the Indian in tones not inviting a confidence.

"I think you mistake me. I find you suffering and in need of help, I can't go away and leave you in this place;" Percy's voice was kind and rang with honest sympathy.

"I am an Indian, and therefore undeserving

of all help or sympathy, and if idle curiosity be the reason of your coming, then I request you to take yourself off with your gentle friend, and leave me to my meditations."

"Why, my dear fellow, I'd not leave a dog in such a plight. We're camped not far from here and we would like you to come over with us to dinner," said Percy, thinking this a very strange Indian, and that the professor would like to meet him.

"I thank you, if you were alone, I should be tempted to accept; as it is, you must excuse me. I shall do very well if I can get to the lake."

"You need water? Are your eyes so bad that you can't use them?"

"It is from trying to use them that I have become totally blind. I have had no water for twenty-four hours. I know I am near the lake, but the ground is so nearly level here that I can not distinguish the diminishing elevation."

"Then you must let me assist you, it is a long time to be without water," said Percy, and turning he called out:

"Obed, you and Pete need not wait for us,

but if you will please tell the professor that we are to have a guest at dinner, I will be greatly obliged."

"All right, young feller, yer 'gentle friend' knows when he's told ter skip. Er hint's ez good's er kick fur me, enny day," and without waiting for his post mortem, Obadiah Boone started with Pete for the camp.

"Has that anomalous brute gone?" The Indian's tones were smooth and bitter.

"Yes, there's no one here but my friend Leon and myself. Obed is our guide and teamster. I've sent him back to let Professor Garceau know you will join us at dinner."

"Yes, you must join us; my father is in command of our little party, and he will be delighted to meet you," insisted Leon, glad that Obadiah was gone.

"But, I can not—"

"Oh, nonsense! you must. Percy and I will not leave you," said Leon in a free and easy way as if he had known him all his life.

"I would not be accepting the hospitality of that other man?"

"Oh, no, indeed; my father hired him in Green River City to help us. He is rough but means well."

"Yes, he is rough, but—oh, well, it matters not."

"You will come?"

"Yes."

"Good enough! Well, Percy, come on."

The Indian straightened up, and his long black hair fell in two heavy braids over his shoulders; as he threw back his blanket, a small buckskin pouch fell to the ground. Percy picking it up, handed it to the Indian laughing:

"Ha! ha! you throw your money about very carelessly."

"No, it is not money, but it contains gems of value—sapphires!" The Indian calmly took the pouch while the boys blankly echoed his final words:

"Sapphires! Sapphires!"

The surprise of the boys at hearing the strange Indian speak fluently in their own language was now greatly increased. That he should so quietly speak of a bag of the precious

stones, and carry them about as he might a bag of buckshot, was truly astonishing, but he continued speaking:

"Why, yes, I think they are sapphires, uncut sapphires, from what I have read of the stones. Are you familiar with these things?"

The boys exchanged glances. They hardly knew how to answer, having been particularly cautioned by the professor against speaking of the object of the search.

"I have seen such stones," answered Leon cautiously.

"Then you will know about these." The Indian was about to untie the bag, but Leon interrupted:

"Wait, and show them to my father, he will probably tell you more than I can."

"Your father is with you? Your voice is that of a mere lad—"

"I am sixteen, all the same."

The keen ear of the Indian detected the note of resentment, and he continued:

"Although it expresses the thoughtfulness and wisdom of maturer years."

"It hardly would appear so when I stand here talking to a man who has been without water for twenty-four hours."

"I confess I am thirsty."

"I don't wonder; now lay your hand on my arm, and we will walk right along."

"Thank you. It would be churlish to refuse, although I must tell you that I have no love for your race."

"Oh, that's all right, I don't think there's much race difference, and we'd better have our dinner before we talk it over. When people are every other way alike, they forget about the skin," said Leon with happy indifference.

"I shall enjoy a good dinner, it's some little time since I've had one; my last bit of jerked meat was feasted upon the day before yesterday."

"How fortunate that we came along! what would have become of you?" cried Leon, happy in having been the means of saving a fellow creature's life.

"Very likely I should have perished; not much loss, though I could have wished for a different ending to my life."

"You are gloomy, but we will ~~arrive soon~~ and among friends you will ~~feel better~~. It is horrible indeed to think of your wandering about alone on the prairie, without food and water."

"Yes, awful, how did it happen? ~~Oh, excuse~~ me, I did not mean to be inquisitive," said Leon.

"Do not speak of it. I will tell you all about myself. I feel that it is ~~not out of ordinary~~ alone, that you ask. From the language of your servant, I had no desire to ~~accept help~~ at your hands. I find you different, and as frankly as you offer, I accept. For the past three days I have been unable to see. My eyes began troubling me about a week ago. I had been traveling across the snow and the brilliant light of the sun reflected from the ~~gleaming~~ snow, proved too much for them. I turned back and was making my way to Green River City. They became worse from constantly using them to find my way; I was obliged to hurry, having only an insufficient supply of provisions, and three days since I found myself unable to



see at all. It was then that my horse got away, and being blinded I had no chance to recover him. He pulled the picket-pin and left in the night."

"You have had it rough for a fact," commented Leon, as the Indian paused in his recital.

"Pretty bad luck all around, until now. It's lucky we found you. When we get into camp perhaps the professor may be able to do something for your eyes," said Percy.

"They will recover if I abstain from using them for a few days."

"We are not going towards, but from Green River City, but if you're not in a hurry to get there, you might travel with us till your eyes get well. I know the professor will not object, will he, Leon?"

"I can promise that my father will be glad to be of service to you," answered Leon, emphatically.

"You will be all right; Leon is the son of Professor Garceau; I am his friend; my name is Percy Randall."

"In my condition, and being only human, I am glad to have fallen into such good hands."

"Here we are now at the camp; how are we to introduce you?" asked Leon.

"You must pardon me, I had forgotten; my condition must be my excuse for not having introduced myself at a previous moment. You may call me—ah, you may call me, Henry West." His slight hesitation passed unnoticed by the boys.

Having reached the camp, the Indian was guided to the tent of the professor, where he was warmly welcomed. It is doubtful if the Indian would have reminded them of his thirst, but now the boys were thoughtful of his needs.

On leaving the tent, they were hailed by Obadiah, as follows:

"Wall, did ye git ther critter safe inter camp?"

"Yes, what do you think of him?" asked Leon propitiatingly.

"I dunno, but I reckon ye'll find him erbout ther slippiest Injun I ever seen."

"I don't think he's an Indian at all," said Percy.

"I'd be with ye, Percy, ef twasn't fur that thar long har o' his'n."

"I say, Obed, we'll have to treat him a little better, now he's our guest, you know the laws of hospitality," said Leon, condescendingly.

"I ain't er goin' ter meddle with ther varmint, but I'll give ye er leetle bit o' advice, it won't cost nothin', either. Don't ye go fur ter trust him! They're all alike an' no good in nary one o' em," grunted Obadiah.

The boys laughed a little. Obadiah was always so prejudiced, though small wonder when they thought of his reason.

Professor Garceau had a cot put up in his own tent, for the use of Henry West, who after a small lunch, took a refreshing bath, and presented his eyes for the inspection of his host.

The professor found a healing lotion, and a pair of smoked glasses for use when his eyes should be able to stand the light a little.

The young Indian might have been twenty-three or four years of age, no more than that, judging from the smooth, clear brown skin. He was tall and though spare in flesh, had not that

gaunt emaciation of the average Indian. His high cheek bones bore evidence to his race, and his costume was much the same as that of any Indian of the plains, although he struck one as a refined and polished young man masquerading in Indian habiliments might have done.

After breakfast the following morning, Prof. Garceau announced that they would break camp.

"You are going North?" asked Henry West.

"Yes, we are journeying towards the North, and are hoping to get through the Moqui Pass."

"The Moqui Pass! It is where I became snow-blind. How strange that you should be going there."

"Indeed, and is there so much snow there now?"

"In the drifts it is yet very deep, but had it not been for a fresh fall of snow about ten days ago, I believe that you might find the ground bare in many places. As it is, you will find it very bad for the eyes, and if you linger, it may prove as disastrous for you as it was for me."

"I have a supply of those smoked glasses,

having anticipated some such need; but why did not you blacken your face about your eyes so as to protect them?"

"I did not think of that until it was too late."

"It seems too bad to take you back to the same place."

"It does not matter, the object that I had in view this misfortune compels me to give up for the present."

"Then we may render you a service by taking you with us."

"Yes, and I will tell you what has brought me into this country, at a more opportune moment."

"Very well, I see that the men have the teams hitched up and the boys have mounted their saddle horses. Come this way, here's the wagon I ride in, there's room for one more," and the professor helped the Indian into a seat, climbing in after him and soon the party was heading northward again.

The boys galloped away from the wagons, to a small butte, thinking to get a good view of the country ahead of them.

"I say, Leon," cried Percy, "have you noticed the pretty stones we're passing?"

"No, I've been watching the wagons; what are they like?"

"The next one I see, I'll get off and pick it up. They're bright, polished and differently colored; wait, there's one now! hold on!" and Percy quickly dismounted. He secured the stone, turned it over and over in his hand, and handed it up to Leon.

"There, that's not so large as some of them, but isn't it pretty?"

"It's queer enough, what do you think it is? How did it come here? It's something like a carnelian."

"What makes the sides so nicely polished, I wonder? that's what puzzles me!" said Percy.

"It has been broken from a larger stone."

Percy walked along, holding to his bridle line and soon picked up another, and then another.

"I declare, Leon, the ground is covered with them," he cried, "and with these queer round black stones. Look! here's one as big as an orange!"

Leon sprang from his horse and looked about.

"Do you suppose it is where the sapphires come from?"

"I don't know, here's another, how alike they are," said Percy, taking one of the round black stones in each hand, and bringing them together with all his might. The stones were shattered into a thousand pieces.

"Well, I never! Isn't that a corker?" cried Leon. Percy looked blank, as he replied, with woeful emphasis:

"That gets me."

"Try it again, and don't strike so hard."

They hunted up more of the peculiar stones.

"That's where they come from," said Percy, examining some of the broken pieces.

"They might be sapphires; one of these big ones would cut into a beautiful paper-weight, eh?"

"They break too easily. See, I just gave these a gentle tap and I have broken this in half; isn't there a pretty display of color?"

"They must be sapphires, and we've found them. I say, Percy, isn't it grand?"

"Let's hurry along."

The boys secured several of the broken and unbroken stones, and remounting, pressed forward.

It was some time before they caught up with the wagons, and as soon as they came within hailing distance, they shouted, with all the earnestness of their convictions:

"Hold on! oh, hold on! we've found the sapphire mine! we've found the sapphire mine! The ground is covered with them!"



## CHAPTER IV.

It is hard to believe that a boy ever lived that did not enjoy the telling of a bit of news; and such important news! Surely they may be pardoned for the boisterous manner in which each strove to tell of the finding of the wonderful sapphires, of the end of their quest.

"Come, come boys, don't both speak at once. You have something to tell, what is it?" asked Prof. Garceau, his manner suddenly recalling the presence of a stranger.

Leon, having finally succeeded in getting one of the larger stones from his pocket, held it out to his father.

"These are the strangest things you ever saw. Are we mistaken in thinking that they may be some kind of sapphires?"

"This? Why, Leon, this is chalcedony, a species of agate, and belongs to the quartz family," said the professor, smiling amusedly.

"Chalcedony! I thought it was something better than that," gasped Leon.

"Is it of value, sir? There is a very great deal of it," said Percy.

"Not especially, although if polished, they might be worth something. These are remarkably large nodules, however. I don't remember to have seen finer. They are usually found in trap rock; these having been released by erosion, or the natural influences of the elements, are found scattered through an alluvial deposit, that is how you found them, is it not?"

"Yes, sir, right in the dirt, or gravel," replied Percy.

"And they are no indications even of sapphires being in the vicinity?"

"None whatever."

"What a disappointment! I felt sure that we had made something of a find."

"Your find might be something were it in any other locality. What I feel most interested in, is a sapphire deposit. Any information concerning that would be of great value to me."

The professor spoke pointedly, having heard through the boys of the bag of gems in the possession of the Indian, and thinking that per-

haps his remark might lead to something. Henry West, however, remained silent.

That night they reached the foot-hills, and, to his satisfaction, Henry West had nearly recovered his sight. Supper finished, they all sat about camp, enjoying themselves in various ways. Pete, who had just returned from caring for the horses, that had strayed a little far, threw down a fine blue grouse.

"That was a good shot, if I do say it that made it," said Pete, looking about with an air that invited inquiry.

"How far, Pete?" asked Leon, picking up the bird and turning it about in his hands.

"Well, sir, I did not stop to measure the ground, but——"

"Oh, if you didn't measure the ground you can't tell if you were a hundred feet or a hundred yards," exclaimed Percy, laughing at his evident annoyance.

"But I know just about how far it was; what's the good of a man's going shooting with a measuring stick?"

"Now, Pete, how far do you think you were from that bird?" asked Percy, seriously.

"There's no powder mark on the feathers, so he must have been at least ten feet away," said Leon, as he carefully examined the grouse.

"It was over a hundred and fifty feet away!" cried Pete.

"And was that all? He was flying, I suppose?"

"No, sir, he wasn't flying. I made a centre shot of him at more than fifty yards, and I call that pretty good shooting, don't you?" asked Pete, turning to Henry West, who was reclining on the ground with his back against the standing-pole of the cook tent.

"Fair; but it would have been better had you hit it in the head at that distance," replied the Indian quietly, with no air of boasting.

"Ha! ha! ha! and do ye think ye could er knocked er grouse's head off at er distance o' fifty yards?" asked Obadiah with a sneer. Obadiah was always boasting of his skill with the rifle, and the idea that anyone could excel him in shooting was absurd.

"I think I could very easily, if the bird were sitting. I used to be able to knock the head

off a grouse or prairie chicken on the wing. don't know that I could do it now. I have done little shooting of late years," replied Hen West, without noticing the sneer. Obadiah gasped once or twice before he spoke:

"Ye—ye mean ter say es how ye've hit bird in ther head on ther wing?"—

"Why surely; when one is in practice it is a easy to aim at the head as the centre of the back."

"Wall, now, I don't b'lieve ye could hit my hat ef I threw it up in ther air," said Obed doggedly.

"Would you like to demonstrate the fact by trying me?" asked the young Indian, a slight smile creeping over his usually impassive face.

The sun was fast drawing near the horizon and the uncertain light was not conducive to good markmanship.

"At fifty yards raise?" asked Obadiah in answer.

"Yes, you may stand at fifty yards, and throw the hat. I think I can hit it."

"Oh, ye think ye kin hit it! Ye said ye could

hit it. Now I'll bet ye er hoss that ye can't hit it," exclaimed Obadiah, in a loud voice, jumping to his feet and taking his broad-brimmed hat from his head he twirled it through his hands.

"I'm not a betting man. It is one of the vices of my race that I eschew. I have but one horse, which having lost I do not expect to ever see again, but I said I could hit your hat—yes. Now, if I fail to put a bullet through it I will make you a present of my rifle."

"Better keep your hat on your head; I'm afraid he'll spoil it for you," whispered Pete, seeing something in the quiet of the Indian that told him he was not boasting.

Leon, who was anxious to see the trial, spoke tauntingly:

"Yes, Obed, a bullet through that hat, and you'll be sorry."

"I'll chance ther hat an never fear but I'll claim yer gun all right enough," growled Obadiah.

"The forfeit is not yours unless my eyes fail me; they are not overstrong yet."

Henry West went quickly to his tent, returning with his rifle, having removed the smoked glasses. His eyes were still bloodshot, but looked dark and brilliant.

"Fifty yards raise, is it?" asked Obadiah, beginning to pace off the distance.

"Yes, fifty or sixty; it doesn't matter."

"An' ye don't keer as how I throw it up?"

"No, I'm not particular, so you throw it into the air."

"Ye don't mind ef I fix it up er bit, so's I kin throw it good an' high?"

"Oh, no, the higher the better."

"All right, I'll fix it so's it'll go up in good shape," replied Obadiah, and taking a bit of string from his pocket, he folded and rolled the felt hat into a ball no larger than his fist, and proceeded to tie the string around it to keep it in shape.

The onlookers were plainly disgusted, but the face of Henry West wore the same inscrutable smile.

"For shame, Obed! that isn't fair!" cried Leon







Henry West stood with his rifle balanced lightly in his hands

"That thar's all right; let 'im hit it if he kin!" said Obadiah, throwing the ball into the air and catching it.

"If you are ready, pace off your distance."

"I'll step off sixty, nor more'n sixty paces," said Obadiah, stretching his legs to the utmost as he counted his steps.

"Here I be, air ye ready?" he sang out as he stopped.

"I say that's not fair, you've made too great a distance," called Leon.

"I would not shoot without fair measurement," said Percy.

"A little distance does not matter, boys; I'll spoil his hat for him."

"I hope you will," said Leon, savagely.

"And so do I," added Percy.

"Air ye ready?" shouted Obadiah.

"Yes."

Henry West stood with his rifle balanced lightly in his hands, one foot thrown a trifle forward, and his brilliant, hawk-like eyes fixed on Obadiah.

The latter suddenly and with wicked force

threw the tightly-bound hat up and from the so far that it could hardly be seen.

With graceful movement the Indian brought his rifle to his shoulder, and pulled the trigger.

Bang! rang out the report. Obadiah ran clumsily forward and picked up his hat, and came slowly towards them. His face assumed a lugubrious expression as he unwound the string and shook it out into shape again.

"Dit he hit it?" cried Pete.

Henry West had gone quietly to his tent with his rifle.

"Hit it! I should say as how he did. Seven holes through it, an two in ther brim worse'n all ther rest. My best hat's gone glim'rin," and Obadiah held out the hat for inspection.

"Whoop!" yelled Pete, not sorry that some of the conceit should be taken out of his fellow workman.

"Good! Ha! ha! ha! I guess someone else can shoot, too, Obed," cried Leon.

"Hurrah! The ventilation may let a little sense into your head," laughed Percy.

The astonishment and chagrin depicted on Obadiah's face were amusing to behold.

"Well, I'll be explored if he kin do it agin!" he muttered, and went to his tent, without another word.

Another day's camp in the foot-hills, and all elt recuperated, and glad to be again moving. Their way now ran along the bottom of a long gulch, through which they were obliged to pick most precarious footing, and in some places to join in holding to the upper sides of the wagons to prevent them from overturning. After a most wearisome day's journey, a halt was called at the beginning of the Moqui Pass.

"How much farther do we go before we encounter drifts?" asked Prof. Garceau.

"When I passed through here, a short time since, the ground was covered to the depth of a few inches where we are now," answered Henry West.

"Then possibly we shall not find snow even higher up."

"You will hardly be so fortunate. The warm days have carried off much of the snow, but there are drifts ahead that will surprise you."

"And how about the other side?"

"There you will find it much worse. It faces the north, you see. I spent nearly a week on top of the divide."

"Hunting I suppose; there must be plenty of game?"

"I believe there is, but I was not hunting for game. True, I had my rifle with me, for it is not wise to go unarmed in this country.

"Indeed! I have seen nothing to alarm me," said the professor, a little anxiously.

"No, doubtless you would be safe under any circumstances; on the contrary, I have reason to believe there are those of my own race that would willingly slay me. Your people, though outwardly disagreeable, are seldom wickedly inclined."

"Whereas your race——"

"Are just the opposite."

"Towards all?"

"Towards one that would have given his life for them; towards one that smothered race prejudice, forgot his family ties, severed his tribal relation, relinquished his hereditary position, quenched his ambitions, all that at a future

day he might make his people great through his sacrifices. My story is a sad one, the story of a wasted life, though it may not be of interest to a stranger." Henry West spoke with unusual energy, and his eyes flashed with feeling.

"That could not be, I am sure, and were it not that I fear the recital may awaken unhappy memories, I would beg you to tell me of your life."

"Life has been but a bitter experience for me, and has taken all my fortitude to bear, but I am an Indian, and I know how to bear pain."

"Then perhaps we would best forget it; it will perhaps re-open wounds that time has all but healed," suggested Prof. Garceau, seeing by the suppressed emotion of his companion that they were approaching sacred ground. This conflict of the soul had left a field that should be trod with care.

"No, the unburdening of one's sorrows to a sympathetic and appreciative ear can but alleviate the pain and rob it of some of its poignancy."

"Tut! tut! boy; you will soon be carrying as

heavy a load as the Old Man of the Sea, at this rate. Time should drive such morbid fancies from your mind. I can but believe that you have made too much of your troubles; you are too young to look at life through blue spectacles," said the professor, establishing himself comfortably in his camp chair, on the shady side of the wall tent; notwithstanding the immense bodies of snow on the mountain tops, the evening was insufferably warm.

"I feel that I owe it to you, for your many kindnesses to one so unfortunate as myself that you should be told my history, who and what I am, and the circumstances that brought me here."

"Do not feel any obligation, my dear boy, but if you believe that knowing your history, I shall be able to advise or assist you in some way, then be sure that I will gladly listen to you," said the professor, hoping that he might learn more of the mysterious bag of sapphires, and where they came from.

But before Henry West could speak in answer they were interrupted by Leon, who came

running from the far side of the wagons, where he had been lounging with the others.

"There are some mountain sheep over in the rocks, may we go for them?" he cried excitedly.

"Well, my son, if you think you will have time for a shot at them before dark, you may go."

"Oh, there's time enough."

"Who is going with you? I do not want all to go; there is danger of some one being shot when there are too many in the party."

"Obed is going, and Percy and I wanted to go, but if you think best, why one of us can remain here."

"That will be best, and I do not wish them to be away after dark."

"Very well, sir," replied Leon, running away. Obadiah, having made his preparations while Leon was conferring with his father, was now impatient to be off.

"Let's settle it by making Henry West go," said Percy, on hearing the professor's ultimatum.

"Not much, ef I know on't," interrupted Oba-



diah; "I don't travel with no sich truck, nor I don't harbor with none of 'em, neither."

"Don't you want Henry West to go; he's a good shot?" said Leon, teasingly.

"No, I don't," growled Obadiah.

"Well, why not?" demanded Leon.

"Cause there'd be er corrosion sure ef we two went erway tergether."

Leon, having secured his rifle, the two started off, leaving Percy gazing after them with his eyes full of longing. After they had disappeared he walked slowly over and joined the two who sat silent by the wall tent.

An audience of more than one seldom invites a confidence, but whether Henry West considered all of his newly-found friends entitled to learn his history, or whether he had not noticed Percy's coming, can not be told; certain it is that after having sat for a long time silent he suddenly spoke:

"Advice, my dear professor, is for those that are not only willing, but able to act upon it. In my case, I am satisfied you will offer none. To begin, I am a full-blooded Indian. My mother

was a Shoshone, my father an Upsaroka. Such a union is not of very frequent occurrence, nor was this one brought about in any very felicitous manner. In one of the many encounters between the two tribes, many of my mother's family were killed and she was captured by the Upsarokas. My father claimed the captive Shoshone and—well, they are gone, both gone now, and I am left. The Shoshones have ever been at peace with the whites. They have been wise enough to see and understand the cause of their inferiority to your race, and in a degree have made good use of their few advantages. With my father's people it has been different. My earliest recollections might have been those of a young wolf; a bed of dried leaves and a bone to gnaw upon. Like the rest of his tribe, my father was envious of all other nations, and his heart was filled with hatred for the whites. My life till my twelfth year was that of the other lads of my tribe, athletic exercises, riding and shooting. In these I excelled them all; I surprised even the chiefs themselves. Then the head chief of our nation was slain in a battle with the Sioux, and after much consultation

my father was chosen for his place. He was in all things qualified for the honor. None could compare with him in stature, in eloquence, in bravery, in cruelty. Then it was that he set about my education. I saw the braves of our tribe hang from hooks caught through strips of their flesh, saw them slash themselves with sharp knives, and paint their faces with the blood that flowed from their self-inflicted wounds; I saw these and many worse barbarities, and heard the admiring plaudits of the on-lookers, but as surely as I had inherited the bone and brawn of my father, so also flowed the blood of my gentle mother in my veins. Even had her teachings not been of better things, my heart rebelled at such sights. My greatest pleasure was, when my father was away, to lie on the ground through the long lazy summer evenings and listen to the soft musical voice of my mother, as she told of the semi-civilization attained by her people from intercourse with the whites. When she would whisper to me of agents that came and took Indian children far away to the distant East, where they were instructed in the language and habits of

the whites, then would my blood run through my veins as the wild horse courses over the prairie, and my soul be filled with the thought of what I might do for my people could I but gain such an opportunity.

"The hope of learning, that I might teach them was ever with me. I never saw the sun rise but I thought that perhaps before it sank beyond the western prairie I might be chosen. In every white trader I saw the mysterious agent that would metamorphose the dirty, ignorant little Indian boy into the savior of his tribe.

"At length the day came. The very atmosphere of that sultry day in August will never be forgotten. The air itself seemed full of wonderful possibilities. The tall cottonwoods that lined the banks of the Big Muddy, where our tee-pees were pitched, waved their sweeping boughs, every branch, every leaf whispering to me that my chance had come."

## CHAPTER V.

At this point in his narrative Henry West paused. He passed his delicately formed hand over his forehead, smoothing back the short straight hair, that stood erect between the two long black braids hanging over his shoulders. His gaze was fixed upon the distant horizon with the intensity that betokens the transition of the soul. Once again he was the little Indian boy of the prairies. A shudder ran through his frame, an expression of pain passed over his face, as with evident effort he recalled himself from the past, and continued:

"That day, Commissioners of high standing, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, came to visit our people. They were venerable, white-haired, long-bearded men. They had a big talk, as they called it, with my father and the other chiefs, and explained that they desired to take some of the more promising of the children with them, that they might educate them in the manner of the whites. Before the

conference was ended my father had sent word to have the children removed from the camp, or hidden so well that they would not be discovered, telling them that the visitors were medicine-men after children to sacrifice to their gods, and if we valued our lives we must not be seen. Many a little heart lay quaking with fear that night, but not mine. The ridiculous stories I did not believe, nor was I surprised that my father, with his hatred of the whites, would not sanction the removal of any of the children of the tribe. He did not wish to be taught, he would not even trade with white men, but eschewed alike their tobacco and their blankets. Never would he consent to have them teach their lies to his children. That night I went to him and begged to be sent with the Commissioners. In answer to my prayers he struck me to the earth. The fires of a hundred generations burned within me to resent that blow. Then the teachings of my mother, like gentle zephyrs, cooled the molten lava from the volcano of revengeful thoughts within me. Shame took the place of resentment. It was his nature, I remembered how I had seen lads of my age

kill the timid wood-chuck and stone her helpless ducklings in wanton sport. It was their nature. Naught was there to them of cruelty in the destruction of the mother-bird that gave her life rather than leave her little flock to perish. I felt that something should be done to raise our people from the ignorance and degradation of their lives, and I resolved, boy as I was, that I would act for myself, and for the future salvation of my tribe. I confided my plans to my mother, and she aided me to steal away in the night. The morrow found me many miles away from the encampment where I was overtaken by the Commissioners.

“You may think it a weakness in me, but I can never think of that step without regret. It was the greatest mistake of my life. I sprang up from that dim trail a living witness to the fact that one of the Upsarokas was desirous of enlightenment. By signs I made them understand my desire, and, suffice it to say, they took me with them and I was shortly placed in the Government school at Carlisle. There they taught me everything, save to forget that I was an Indian. Oh, how proud I was always of that!

The acquisition of knowledge is not always a source of pleasure. I soon found that my task would be even greater than I had thought, for the inferiority of our people was great. I was proud, and I saw that our only chance lay in labor. We must earn our bread by the sweat of the brow, even as did our white brothers. Work would be the theme for me to lecture upon when I should return to my people. I would bring about a change so gradually that they would not perceive it until they had grown to be like the whites.

“Ten years among my civilized brothers and my early life had become a memory. I had perfected myself in all that I needed for the success of my life's work, and I at last arrived among my father's people, who were to take me, as I fondly thought, for their deliverer. Did I note changes, or had I forgotten what the life really was? I still wore my hair as did the men of my tribe. At the agency I had discarded my Eastern garb and donned moccasins and blankets. I had not forgotten our language, but I can not tell the shock to my nature, now utterly changed by the refining influences under which



I had for so many years lived. Both of my parents were dead. The cause of my mother's death prevented me from shedding tears over my father's grave. The wood-chuck had perished. Had it all been in vain? The new chief received me coldly, and watched me closely, thinking I had come to usurp his place. He heard my plans with suspicion, and said I wanted to make slaves of them. The few worthless white men that had found wives among the foolish women of our tribe advanced the idea that I was an impostor, that I was not of them. I was chased from their midst, stoned by the very children I had come to save, driven like a thief from among my father's people. Had I but died then I might have been believed—but no, they did not dare kill me. As it is, my life is a failure, and my people are doomed to extinction."

The young Indian ceased speaking, his final words so filled with utter hopelessness, that they thrilled his listeners with sympathy for the unfortunate man, but with an effort Prof. Garceau said in his usual cheery tone:

"My dear Henry, you have been making a

mountain out of a molehill. It is sad, but only another case of the ingratitude of the world. Come, cheer up, and let me prescribe for you."

"I suppose a drowning man should clutch at straws."

"No straws about it; I am going to prescribe a dose of your own medicine, work," said the professor, bringing down his hand on his knee with a loud slap.

"What is my work and where shall I find it?" asked Henry West.

"I can help you to find it when I go East. We will talk of that another time, meanwhile the dew is falling and we had best go inside. It is time that our hunters were returning."

Very shortly they heard the voice of Obadiah, loudly complaining:

"Ef we'd only er had that thar wuthless Injun he mought er trailed im up so's we mought er got 'im, but he ain't no good nohow, 'cept fur loafin' round camp."

Leon's voice broke in indignantly:

"Don't talk so loud—you didn't want him to come, and you know it."

Then Prof. Garceau raised the canvas of the tent and the dim light of the candle shone upon the faces of the returning hunters.

Human nature is much the same the world over, whether it be under the fustian jacket of the mountain guide or the broadcloth of the scheming politician. When one is anxious for his own aggrandizement it is hard to look with kindly eyes upon another in growing favor.

It had not taken Obadiah long to discover that Henry West knew much more about the country than he did himself, and to this fact he attributed the considerate manner of the professor towards the young Indian. To Obadiah an Indian was an Indian, and that was all there was of it. They were like so many venomous snakes with no choice between them.

It is always the biggest fish that bites and falls back into the water, the largest game that is wounded and escapes.

"So you have returned, and where is your game?" asked Prof. Garceau, as the newcomers entered the tent.

"Did you get one, Leon? Tell us all about it," exclaimed Percy.

"Give a fellow time to get his breath. If you'd climbed where we've been, I guess you'd think a little breath desirable." Leon spoke a little petulantly. It would have been so much more agreeable to have had a successful hunt, to have killed at least one or two of those magnificent mountain sheep.

Obadiah dropped his bulky frame down upon an empty box that did duty as an extra chair, and ejaculated:

"Wall, I tell ye. The finest buck I ever seen carried erway an ounce o' lead that come from my gun, an don't ye furgit it!" Then he glared about as if defying the others to gainsay at least that much, but Percy, who was no respecter of persons, laughed:

"Ha! ha! very lucky he did not carry off the gun, too. Considerate of him, wasn't it? But why didn't you bring us some mutton?"

"Did the best we could, and no one could do more," answered Leon.

"Never mind, better luck next time," said Henry West.

"Did you see any signs of sapphires?" asked the professor with significant emphasis.

"No, sir, none," answered his son.

Henry West, who had been negligently reclining in a comfortable campchair, his blanket thrown back from the shoulders, showing his fringed and gaily embroidered buckskin shirt, now assumed an air of interest.

"You were not so fortunate as I, Leon," said he, "for I found a bag full of them in the trail, and I was not looking for sapphires, either."

"Ah, indeed," said Prof. Garceau. "Is it possible? How very singular!"

"Where did you say you found them?" asked Percy, as Henry West produced from among the folds of his blanket the little buckskin bag that had excited their curiosity.

"Humph! that all ye got? Why, a leetle ways from here thar's a place I kin show ye whar ye kin shovel 'em up by ther bushel," said Obadiah with a snort.

Without noticing the interruption the young Indian proceeded:

"These I picked up in this bag just as you see it. I thought they were sapphires, but was not sure. They must have been dropped by some one who passed ahead of me."

While he was speaking Henry West had untied the string about the bag, and now allowed the stones to tumble out upon the table.

To the experienced eye of the professor the translucent rays of the stones, as they tumbled helter-skelter, pell-mell out of the well-worn little buckskin bag, told of values beyond estimation.

"Oh, what beauties!" cried Leon, as they all crowded about the table. "Weren't you lucky to find them?"

"I thought I had some fine ones, but these quite put mine into the shade," said Prof. Garceau. "I will take you into our confidence. The sapphires I have with me I did not find, but I desire to find where they came from, that is the object of our quest. Obadiah seems to think we will have no difficulty, that he can in fact pilot us to the very spot. Here are mine; we can compare them," and the professor, taking his pouch of gems from his pocket, emptied it beside those of Henry West. The latter without glancing at the stones, snatched the buckskin bag from the table, and held it to the light.

"Ha! is it so? The bags are the same—they have the same mark—they were made by the same hand!"

"What is it? What has the same mark, do you say?" asked Prof. Garceau.

"This little Maltese cross over a crescent stitched here. It is the same on both bags!"

"That is so. How very singular!"

"It goes to prove that both belonged to one person. I found this about a hundred miles from here; this of yours came from?"

"It was given to General Miles, the uncle of our friend Percy, by a man of your race called Chief Joseph, after his surrender. You may remember that great consideration and many kindnesses were shown him last fall at the termination of the Nez Perces trouble," said the professor in answer.

Henry West was silent for a few moments. He felt a sudden distrust. It was the Indian nature to be suspicious. Then he spoke, quickly and earnestly:

"Yes, yes, I remember well. One more instance of the broken promises of the whites. I

was present at the surrender of which you speak. The terms of the whites were as of old, unjust; but the poor fellows had no choice, they were forced to accept them. I saw General Miles and talked with him, but I could do nothing. I met Chief Joseph; ah, there is a man worthy of the respect of any. Consideration? Was not the consideration shown him, at the price of this wealth?" and the Indian brushed with a scornful gesture of his hand the priceless heap of sapphires that lay on the table before him.

"I can but believe you are mistaken, Henry; as mistaken in your judgment of me, as in your belief that the stones were the property of your Chief Joseph."

"Show me that I am wrong," said Henry West, in proud defiance, "show me that I am wrong and I will apologize."

"Let me explain; you are too hasty. The owner of these sapphires is not yet found, though doubtless they have all belonged to one man, that man was not Chief Joseph. This is the story that the latter told: About two



months before the battle of the Big Hole, he had sent a few of his braves down amongst the Utes and Pawnees to induce them to join with him against the whites. They were unsuccessful, and on their return they went through this country. On the banks of the Gros Ventre River they came upon a solitary cabin; they murdered the occupant, pillaged and burned the cabin, and amongst the plunder found this bag of stones, which they brought to their chief, and which, as I said, he afterwards gave to Percy's uncle. If, as we have every reason to suppose, all evidences of the murdered man's identity are lost, surely we have the right to prospect for the mine from which these wonderful stones came."

"Forgive me, dear sir, my blood must be my excuse for my hasty words; I am still but a savage, you see. You have been kinder to me than I deserve, and have placed things in a most reasonable light. I will gladly join you in your search, if you wish, and will suggest that you keep the two bags of gems together; it may be that Providence will enable us to restore them to those who should inherit them."

"Yes," replied Prof. Garceau; "yes, I will care for the stones and I most gladly accept your help in our search for the mine."

"It was not far from the ford where I crossed the Gros Ventre River that I picked up the pouch," said Henry West.

"You may have been over the very spot and never known it."

"Quite likely."

"Are you sufficiently acquainted with the country to recognize a map of it?" asked the professor, opening a large map and spreading it out, "here is one that should be correct, made from Government surveys. How does it look to you?"

"Pretty fair; there's the Wind River range. We must be about here between these mountains and this first range," said the young Indian, placing his index finger at the point named.

"I remember one thing perzac'ly," said Obadiah, interrupting the conversation, "them thar sapphires as I found wasn't nigh no river, but thar was jest dead loads o' them stones all

ther same; ye'll git all ye want when we g thar."

"Good enough, Obed! I thought you were asleep, dreaming about that mountain sheep carrying off your ounce of lead," said Leon.

"No, I warn't asleep, war jest thinkin' that ye make sich er fuss erbout er handful o' them stones that when ye git thar ye'll all go plum crazy."

"Now that you are one of us," said the professor, turning to Henry West, "how are we to get to that crossing of the Gros Ventre River, with the least difficulty?"

"You can not get there at all at this time of the year; it is entirely out of the question."

The professor looked at him in blank amazement, then he rejoined with an annoyed laugh:

"Oh, I see, the way is closed by the snow; what are we going to do? Get there we must."

"We might build a raft and go down the river."

"Ha! that's just the thing. We will build a raft. We have tools with us and Obed here is a first-class axeman."

"It will have to be a large one to accommodate the horses and wagons."

"Ye won't hev to build no raft," again interrupted Obadiah, "fur them sapphires isn't further than ther top o' ther Moqui Pass."

"I fear, Obed, that they will not prove what we are looking for."

"No, sir, nary er bit o't. They war sapphires, just piles an' piles o' them," said Obadiah, beginning to have faith in his great find, from the repeated telling of it.

## CHAPTER VI.

Later, as they had gathered about the blazing camp fire, with its lurid and uncertain flames bringing out the faces in distorted lights and shadows, the time seemed conducive to reflection, and the recounting of those experiences that strike one as having been the most peculiar. The discussion of Henry West's affairs had held their attention for some time, greatly to the disgust of Obed, who began to feel himself in the background. No one had spoken for several moments; nothing broke the stillness of the beautiful starlight night, save the steady munching of the horses tied to the wheels of the nearest wagon, and the occasional snapping of some green twig upon the fire.

"What's that noise over there?"

"Where?"

"It seems to come from behind the mess wagon," said the professor.

"I thought I heard something moving about over there sometime ago," said Leon. All listened and looked in that direction.

"Nothing but the wind blowing the canvas," said Percy, as he stirred up the fire, sending a shower of bright sparks heavenward.

"Thar's no wind an' thar's nothin' about thar, lest it 's some prowlin' ghost an' if it ware it wouldn't be the fust I've seed," said Obed.

"Ha! ha! ha! Give us the ghost story, Obed. I knew they weren't all laid yet," exclaimed Leon.

"Yes, yes, a ghost story from Obed," echoed Percy.

"Thar's no story 'bout this un in particular, but I seen him, an' don't ye forgit," growled Obed.

"Of course you did, but we haven't seen such things; go on Obed, like a good fellow, tell us all about it," laughed Percy.

"I couldn't tell ye all; its er hull romance ter begin at the beginning, but I've often wished I'd killed that ghost, never hed no luck since I let him git away from me."

"And you let him go after actually catching him? Do tell us, Obed."

"Yes, I caught 'im, an' that's all ther good it

did me, save it cured me o' playin' keerds. I've never turned er keerd since."

"Why, was it a card-playing ghost?"

"Yes, 'twas er gambler's ghost. An it all came 'bout this way. I'd jest come out ter ther mountings, an' as I left er moughty purty gal back home, that I wur kinder hankerin' ter marry, I were in er hurry ter git rich."

"Oho! you were something of a masher in your young days," interrupted Leon.

"Well, I didn't take no back seat fur none o' ther young bloods in them days, but we'll jest skip ther fust volum' o' this here romance, 'cause it don't hev no bearin' on ther wind-up."

"I'd like to hear what the girl was like," interrupted Percy.

"Oh, shut up, Percy, and let him tell the yarn," said Leon.

"Reckon I'd better let him tell it," growled Obed.

"Don't get huffed, old fellow. I didn't like to see the heroine get slighted, a few pages about blue eyes, red cheeks and golden locks would come in very nicely here," said Leon.

"Never mind 'er looks; ye don't hev ter praise 'er."

"Well, I dare say her face was homely enough to fry ice, and I hope she gave you the mitten," laughed Leon, whereupon Obed picked up a discarded boot and threw it at Leon, who dodged the missile, and it landed near enough to the horses to startle them.

"I think there is something about that mess-wagon; see how the horses are looking in that direction," said the professor.

"That boot Obed threw scared them," replied Percy.

"Or else they were frightened by Obed's ghost story," added Leon, whilst Obed, to comfort himself, proceeded to fill his pipe.

Silence again permitting, Obed, who was nothing loth, continued with his recital.

"Now, as I were sayin', fur more'n one reason, I wur partic'larly anxious fur gittin' rich in er hurry. Now this is bad fur more'n er good many reasons."

"Come, Obed, you're getting clear away from your graveyard story; it is beginning to sound



like a homily on our own intentions," said the professor.

"I were only tellin' ye this as er kind of an apology fur confessin' that I thought es how I could make er fortin' by gamblin', beatin' another man outer his money at keerds."

"Oh, I see a bad piece of business at all times."

"Kerrect, sir; I allow it's purty low, an' I dare say if I'd killed that ghost, as I'd about made up my mind ter, I'd got my money back an' had good luck arterwards, but I didn't; yer see ther story winds up in er mighty poor way. I was up in Bannock at ther time of ther fust gold excitement, an' not diggin' it out er ther ground fast enough in ther day time I thought as how I could double up on time, an' win as much more o' nights at keerds. It were at one o' these times I'm tellin' ye 'bout, an' luck hed bin runnin' my way most tremendous. I were winnin' every bet I laid down. I had er big pile o' chips in front o' me, an' my pockets were stuffed full o' money. I were fairly loaded with the stuff. Great guns! but I were a millionaire fur

a little while!" and here Obed gasped, either from his natural shortness of breath or from the recollection of those few moments of affluence.

"What then? Did you wake up and find it all a dream?" queried Leon.

"Didn't wake up, for I weren't asleep, but I looked up, an' noticed the dealer were lookin' over my shoulder like, an' both o' the men settin' ther playin' on either side o' me had moved a bit further from me, sort o' wantin' more room, as it were like, but what I noticed most, my luck were gone right then en' thar; every bet I made I lost, until I were down to my last chip. This didn't bother me so much, fur I knew my pockets had been crammed full o' money. I were about to dig up some more o' the needful, when the queer look on the dealer's face, as he stared at somethin' over my head, made me turn about an' look up."

"Ha! what's that? Didn't you hear something over beyond the mess wagon?" asked Percy.

"Yes, I did; something like a groan," answered Leon.

"I also heard what sounded like a moan groan from that direction," said the professor and all peered out into the darkness, which was more black and impenetrable from the having been gazing so long at the fire.

"Nothin' I reckon, but the win er raisin'. Wal, as I were sayin', I looked up an' behind me, an' thar I saw ther white face of er man I'd hed pointed out to me afore. His face warn't white, leastwise thar warn't no color in it. It were more of a blue grey. His great big eyes, 'way back in their sockets, looked down at me, an' right then I knew I were a goner. It were the Gambler's Ghost. I'd seen him afore, an' knew from more'n one man that when he came in an' stood behind er man, that man never had no more luck. Wal', all I wanted were to git away from thar, an' so I threw down that last chip an' lit out from thar as fast as my legs would take me. When I got out inter ther street, an' back ter my cabin, I dove my fists down inter my pockets ter see how much I had. Wal, right then were one time in my life ye could hev knocked me over with a feather. I

didn't hev nary a two-bit piece left—I were clean broke!"

"Ha! ha! ha! served you right, you old sinnèr! Anyone so wicked as to gamble ought to lose his money," said the professor.

"But what became of your money—did you ever see that ghost again?" asked Percy.

"Yes, I did see that thar same wuthless ghost once arterwards. I found out he'd robbed me, that it weren't ther fust time he'd done ther trick, an' I put ther vigilantes arter him, but neither me nor any o' them fellers could find any trace of him about camp. I hed no luck arter that, an' some years back I got ter hankerin' ter go back home an' see ther folks once more, an' so I rolled my blankets and pulled my freight for ther old place." Here Obed stopped in his narrative and watched the flickering flames of the camp fire for some moments. Even the careless boys detected a sadness in his gruff tones, and the innate feeling of reverence for that one spot always most sacred to wanderers, checked their raillery for the moment.

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"Wal', I found the old home a bit more rusty, most o' the old people I had known were dead and gone, an' the kids grown up an' didn't know me. Somehow, the old town looked small an' before I'd been ther a day I'd hed enough of it."

"What about that girl you started to tell us about?" asked Leon.

"I'm comin' ter that part. Ye see I were sneakin' around tryin' ter find out about her without askin' no pointed questions, an' it was so long since I'd left home I didn't hardly expect ter know her again, er good many years hed rolled along since I see her last. Wal', the next day as I were a scoutin' about, tryin' ter look up ther old trails, who should I come across but the very woman! I knowed her in a minute, though by that time she warn't no spring chicken. Here she comes a-sailin' down ther trail a-holt of er man's arm, an' wuss luck than all, that man were nary else than that sneak-thief of er gambler's ghost! I can jest see him afore me this minute—they passed me—she looked at me as she might hev done at er hoss tied ter ther post, but I see that ther

ghost knew me, his blue lookin' face got white as a sheet——"

"Well, I declare! truth is stranger than fiction after all!" exclaimed Percy, as Obed stopped to recover his breath.

"Whew! how did he ever find his way back to your place?" asked Leon.

"That I never knew. I jest passed him as cool as yer please—o' course I hed too much manners ter carve a man in the presence of a lady, an' I hed nary er toothpick with me at ther time. Then I found out from some o' my old cronies that this chap hed turned up from the mines with a lot o' money, an' hed married that very woman of all others."

"What's rattling the pans and kettles beyond the mess wagon?" asked Leon, interrupting the narrative, as he sprang to his feet.

"There is something there as sure as you live!" exclaimed Percy.

"Cinnamon!" roared Obed, as a most pronounced clatter told all that a visitor of some kind was investigating their commissary department.

"It's a bear!" yelled Leon.

"Get your guns!" shouted Percy, rushing to the nearest wagon, where the horses, now pulling and stamping in abject terror, had been tied.

"Go slow, boys; careful, or you'll be shooting each other," cautioned the professor, as all had now gotten to their feet and were securing their weapons. At the same time there came the noise of a crash among the pans and camp kettles, and the big mess wagon tottered and shook, as if it were about to go over. Someone cried: "Look out!" then there was a growling and roaring, then a huge, dark, furry mass dashed among them, and through the fire, which had burned down quite low, scattering the coals and glowing embers in all directions, causing consternation and dismay to all our travelers.

"It's a grizzly!" cried one.

"A cinnamon!" shouted another.

"He's gone!" and then Obed, who was stooping low and peering out into the darkness: "Look out—here he comes again!" A rush, a

scattering of many feet, and the lumbering monster was in their midst again, making straight at Obed, who had drawn his hunting knife. As the animal went by he struck a powerful blow at its head. The momentum and his own awkwardness sent Obed tumbling over on his back. The others rushed to help him up.

"Are you hurt, Obed?" asked Leon.

"No, and neither is ther b'ar, ef it is er b'ar. I never see no sich a head on er b'ar afore, an' though I brought down my ol' trusty cleaver right whar ther soft spot in his skull orter be, I never scratched him. An' look at this! An inch o' thar best bit o' steel that ever were ground has gone off the end of it!" exclaimed Obed, holding his knife close to the flickering flame that came from the end of a pitch-pine knot.

"It certainly had a most singular head. I noticed that just before you struck at it the nose was as wide as between the ears. I don't think that was a bear at all," said the professor.

"The Gambler's Ghost after Obed!" laughed Leon.



"Huh! an' I only wish it mought be. But ther beast hed er hairy coat on ef I didn't draw no blood," said Obed.

"I wonder if he'll come back. If I could only get the end of my rifle as close to his skull as Obed got his knife he'd walk no more, ghost or bear," said Percy, who, although he had been the most excited at first, had now come to himself, and was anxious for a shot at this mysterious enemy. Henry West was doing his best to quiet the greatly excited horses. He knew better than the boys what the consequences would be if they should break loose and stampede—days of delay in recovering them, if indeed they were so fortunate in the end.

After all had recovered from the effect of the last charge, and the horses had become more quiet, a noise was heard not far from them. Evidently this nocturnal prowler had no intention of deserting them. It now occurred to the professor that some concerted action should be contemplated, in case of another onslaught.

"It's a dangerous thing to wound a cinnamon

or a grizzly in the night time," said the professor.

"Or any other time," added Henry West. "If the moon were only up we could see to get a good shot."

"It must be a cinnamon and he does not propose to leave," said Leon.

"It mought be er b'ar, an' then again it moughtn't. Who ever heard of a b'ar stam-pedin' through er blazin' fire?" asked Obed, and the silence that followed told him that he had advanced a hard query to answer. Then he continued: "I don't much think as how even our friend Mr. West kin say he ever heard of a b'ar runnin' through a camp fire like this one."

"Can't say that I ever did," replied Henry West good-naturedly, as he walked toward the mess wagon, to investigate the damage done there.

"Huh! then from all ther evidence, as I've dug up, ye can't swar, as it were er b'ar," said Obed with a majestic wave of his hand that would have convinced a jury.

The boys had pushed together the scattered

embers, and had piled on fresh wood to such an extent, as to illuminate the whole surroundings.

"I think it will prove to be a bear, and that he is worse than snow-blind or he would not have run through the fire," said Henry West, returning from the mess-wagon that was some few rods from them.

"Why! what d'ye find thar?" asked Obed, who had not thought to find any solution of the mystery there.

"Keep quiet, he's coming this way again; all drop down as low as you can, and we will get him against the horizon; let the professor hold a bit of flame back and above us, and we can then get the sights on the ends of our guns," said Henry West, and all complied with the directions, and in a few seconds they all saw a large shadowy form on the horizon up against the starlit sky.

"He's coming!" exclaimed Leon.

"Let him come nearer, and when we all have a good sight drawn on him, let us fire together. He is now inside two hundred yards; wait now,

he'll come near!" said West, whose eyes in the cool dark night were equal to the best of the others. Each felt anxious to get in his shot first, as in accord with any having a bit of sporting blood in his veins, and yet all were too honorable to desire any advantage of the others.

"When you say ready! Henry," said the professor, "I'll count one, two, three, and at three, all fire at the same time."

"That's the way," said Percy.

"Keep quiet, all, he has stopped, and only that the wind is now coming from him to us," whispered West, "he'd be wary of us." A few moments of intense suspense, made doubly great in the darkness of the night, and with the uncertainty of what their antagonist might be. The boys had a certain faith in the correctness of any statement Henry West might make, there was always something in his words that carried conviction, something suggesting the height of folly to imagine an error in any of his surmises. The monster might be able to see as well as they—old Obed did not seem to be

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alarmed, but then he was tough and hardened, inured to all kinds of hardships, and the professor's estimate of the danger about to be encountered was not to be entered in the summing up of probabilities. They all saw the dark object moving toward them once more, its size appearing greater against the horizon. Then a low whisper from Henry West: "Ready!" and every eye was turned along a shining barrel as the professor, torch in hand, replied in a low, clear voice: "One, two, three!"—then came the combined reports ringing out on the clear, dark night.

## CHAPTER VII.

Henry West sprang to his feet and was again amongst the terrified horses, doing his best to quiet them, and the boys rendering their aid, the danger of their breaking loose was averted. Obed had not arisen, but remained in the same position.

"He's our meat, whatever the brand!" shouted that worthy, now getting to his feet.

"We must be a little careful; he may be only wounded," suggested the professor.

"He hasn't moved nary inch since we shot, an' there's no use in no kind o' varmint playin' possum in the night time; he's deader'n a door nail," said Obed, kicking the burning limbs about to find a satisfactory one for a torch. This being secured, he carefully reloaded his rifle; the others did the same. He then raised the torch above his head, and followed by all, carefully made his way in the direction of the animal that had so kindly put itself up as their target. The uncertain light from the pitch pine

torch illumined the grass and shrubbery about them in the most fantastic manner, and the dark shadow of more than one inanimate object formed itself to call for their most careful inspection.

"That's it sure this time!" exclaimed Leon, as they once more halted and gazed intently at something dark in front of them.

"Hold your torch higher, Obed," said the professor.

"That's old Ephraim, an' he never made a kick," cried Obed as they all cautiously approached the object, and the light of the flickering torch told them they had found what they sought.

"It's a bear!"

"Is he dead?"

"Yes, deader'n a mack'rel," replied Obed, giving the heavy monster a kick.

"But what's that 'round his head?" asked Leon.

"A keg of some sort, as sure as you live!" exclaimed Percy.

"Well, well, that explains all. In rummag-

ing about the mess wagon his fondness for sweets made him jam his head into that molasses keg that Leon smashed the head in to scrape the bottom at noon," said the professor.

"That's just it, and the splinters acted like the wires in a mouse trap, and he couldn't get it off," said Percy.

"Ha! ha! ha! That's what you suspected, Henry," said the professor. "You missed that empty molasses keg."

"Yes, I thought that would account for it."

"And that was what you meant when you said that you thought him worse than snow-blind."

"But why didn't you tell us that before?" asked Leon, trying unsuccessfully to pull the keg off the bear's head.

"I only surmised as much, seeing that the keg was gone, and then I thought you would all be more careful if you did not know it. It's a dangerous thing to attack a bear in the night time," replied Henry West.

"I ain't afeerd o' no b'ars night or daytime," said Obed, rather ungraciously; but to do him



credit he felt a bit sheepish, thinking what an undue amount of precaution had been taken in the slaughter of a blindfolded bear.

"He's a big fellow. I'll bet my bullet hit the mark; I had a dead sight on him when I pulled the trigger," said Percy.

"And so did I," added Leon.

"We will find out all about that in the morning," said the professor.

"Aren't you going to skin him tonight, Obed?" asked Leon.

"Jest as the boss says; his meat ain't no good at this time o' ther year, but his hide is a fine one. In ther high mountings b'ars don't come out o' ther holes so early, an' o' course don't shed so soon," said Obed.

"What a huge monster! He must weigh at least a thousand pounds," said the professor.

"All of that, and what a worthless mass! Even my people object to their flesh," said Henry West.

"Then I reckon we don't want none on it," interpolated Obed, whose dislike to the red men as a race prompted the remark.

"Worse things have been eaten, even by white men, Obed," said the professor.

"That's right, an' by me, too, perfessor, fer I've tackled ev'rythin' from dogs to rattlesnakes at some time er other in my life," said Obed.

"Jerusalem! don't say you've eaten dogs, Obed; prairie dogs, you mean," exclaimed Leon.

"All kind o' dogs, an' prairie dogs is ther wust," said Obed, and here the professor interrupted the gastronomic colloquy with:

"Come now, we must all turn in and wait until morning to inspect this fellow any further."

What wonder was it that Percy's dreams were of encounters with mad grizzlies, and that the gentle kicks bestowed by the accommodating Leon were mistaken for ursine hugs?

The distant peaks were but just taking to themselves the first suspicion of a roseate hue—when all again stood about the carcass of the huge grizzly. A few minutes were wasted in examining the keg about the bear's head; the point of the blade of Obed's knife was found buried in the oaken staves. By no effort of theirs could the keg be removed, therefore an

axe was brought, with which they speedily demolished it. As the hide was a fine one, Obed lost no time in getting it off. Then, to the supreme satisfaction of all, it was found that every bullet had hit its mark, and, indeed, it seemed that any one might have been fatal.

After a good breakfast had been partaken of, the horses fed and the wagons packed, the party was again on the march.

"I hope we shall have many a bit of sport like this," said Leon.

"Tut, tut, Leon! never speak of sport for sport's sake when it comes to taking animal life. A man is a wanton that would kill one of God's creatures for the mere pleasure of it. The need of food is the only excuse that should be offered for the taking of animal life."

"But just think of the pleasure in exhibiting the trophies of the chase!" said Percy grandiloquently.

"Ha! I've no patience with any such thing—I've no use for these head hunters; it's worse than the slaughter of the millions of song-birds to adorn the women's bonnets," said the professor, wrathfully.

"Ha! ha! ha! but do you know, professor, it is claimed that if that were so they would have been exterminated long ago, and that they are actually produced from the feathers of barn-yard fowls, manufactured and dyed to represent anything in fashion, from a humming bird to the bird of paradise."

"Humph! that may be so, but I doubt it. Solicitation for our own safety can be our only excuse for slaughtering that poor beast last night," said the professor.

"You don't need to feel so badly about that, for after we have shown the skin to those fellows back home who enjoy looking at such things, we can give it to some poor chap, and he can have a good winter coat made out of it; so now, sir, you see that we have done something commendable," explained Percy.

"That's one way to look at it, and it's a mooted question as to whether there may not be something more than sophistry in all Jesuitical reasoning, but for myself I've always called a spade a spade."

"It will dig ground just the same if you call

it a shovel," persisted Percy, and the professor, to avoid the shoals of metaphysical controversy, shouted to Obed, who was driving the lead team and walking beside his wagon at the time, in order to favor his horses, as they were now slowly toiling up a heavy incline:

"Oh, I say, Obed! isn't it pretty near time we camped for noon?"

Obed, catching only the last words, threw on his brake, and stopping his team to rest, yelled back: "What yer say?" and the professor repeated his question as the noses of his team came up close to the rear of Obed's wagon.

"I thought as how we'd turn off at ther top o' ther hill an' pull up ther gulch ter ther springs fur noon,—tain't much outer ther way. Thar's a hot spring, an' er cold spring, an' er paint pot, an' er soap vat, an' er giant's skellington, up thar—er hull Musee wuth lookin' at."

"We ought to take all that in."

"It's not much out er our way, an' I kin git soap ter rub inter that ar b'ar's hide, an' tan it fur ye in er couple o' days."

"What nonsense are you giving us, Obed?

Who'd have left any paint pots or soap vats in this out of the way corner of the world?" asked Leon, as he closed in to the conference on Daphne's back.

"They're thar all right, an' big uns, too, near as big as them up at ther head o' ther Yaller-stone River, an' that man's skellington is thar, too, an' when ye see him ye'll say as how he must hev bin ther king-bee o' these yer parts," said Obed, feeling pleased to think that he had something of interest to show.

"How tall do you really think he was, Obed?" asked Percy.

"Jest how tall when he were up on his feet?"

"Yes, would he have been over eight feet? That would have been a tall giant."

"Eight feet! More like twenty-eight feet. I didn't hev no tape line along, but ye kin measure him fur yerselves," said Obed.

"Possibly you have discovered the fossilized remains of some pterodactyl, or some ichthyosaurus," said the professor.

"Ic—the—old—saw—horse may hev been his name fur all I know—he wuz afore my time,"

said Obed; "I've seen smaller Injuns with longer handles to their front names than that," he continued, seeing that the boys were trying hard to suppress a smile.

"I'm afraid we'll hardly have the good fortune to find the remains of one of those fellows, but we'll pull along, Obed; we'll certainly tarry awhile there, and if it makes us late we can camp for the night. It may be time well spent, and a look at what remains to tell us of the days of the former inhabitants of the earth comes to us but once in a lifetime," said the professor.

"All right, sir, here we go! Git up thar, old hoss—ye hear us talkin' o' turnin' out!" And with sundry ejaculations, Obed, after reaching the top of the hill, turned his horses to the left, and after an hour's time they found themselves in a broken sandstone formation.

"Whoa! Here we be!" cried Obed, and pulling in his tired horses he sprang to the ground. Camp was soon pitched for the noon meal and rest. Fault was found with the scarcity of wood and the sparseness of the herbage, the

growth of which was retarded by the gravelly character of the soil that lay between the sandstone reefs.

"Lead ther hosses ter that upper spring, an' I'll show ye the most cur'ous things ye ever see —beats ther paint pot an' ther soap vat all holler, fur paint pots is common at ther head o' ther Yallerstone, an' I dessay ther's soap vats, too, ef ye only kin find 'em. But I defy er muckle-eyed-Greek ter show ye er spring that gives ye ice in ther hottest days o' July," said Obed, starting off with his team toward the ridge across the small gulch by the side of which they had encamped.

"Come on, Leon!" cried Percy, and all followed Obed, leading their horses over to the spring. Here was found one of those most curious formations of nature, which was of great interest to the professor. There were what appeared to be four springs along the slippery ridge, some fifty or sixty yards apart. Steam in clouds was coming from that one next to the uppermost one. This they passed with but a cursory examination, hurrying with the thirsty horses to the one at the top of the hill.



"Here's whar ye git yer pure ice-water," exclaimed Obed, throwing himself down on the ground a few feet below the spring to slacken his thirst from the tiny rivulet of sparkling cold water, as did the boys, but the professor was not so thirsty but that he had to investigate the spring and its attendant phenomena first.

Obed had been quite accurate in the main features of his description of this spring, although it had been most meagre in detail.

Clear ice could be procured here, but it was not floating about in the spring; a conical hole, the upper surface of which seemed a mass of calcareous concretions thrown up from the ground some two or three feet. The inner surface was coated with ice. The bottom of this, a dark hole, appeared some six or eight inches in diameter and below the top about seven or eight feet, through which came a strong draught of chilled air.

The top of the rim was broken away at the lower side, and the ice, melted by the warm rays of the sun, caused the water that did not flow back and down the icy sides of this queer


orifice to trickle out and down in a small stream about as large as a man's wrist.

"A very odd thing this, and but partially explainable," said the professor, greatly perplexed.

"Jest as I told ye it were, but I didn't bargain ter explain it ter ye," said Obed after he had risen from the ground. All now stood about the hole, holding their horses, one or two of which had positively refused to drink the water, not being used to anything so cold at that time of the year; however, Obed had told them they would find it warmer below.

"Strange enough to find ice here on so warm a day," said Henry West; "how do you account for it, sir? You will be the only one who can find us the solution."

"We can have no effect without a cause, but it's not always certain that we can find it. In this case, with all due allowance for hasty conclusions, it is safe to say that this cold blast of air that seems to be constantly rushing up from below"—and here the professor tossed some bits of paper, that he had torn to pieces,



out from him and into the hole, and the rushing air carried them up above their heads like so many butterflies—"congeals the moisture of the night air, encrusting these icy sides with layer after layer of frost, which is again melted away by the heat of the following day; and the water trickling down keeps that hole open."

"But what causes the cold air to rush up in that way? That's the question," said Percy.

"Some chemical action of the substances below, bringing about rapid evaporation causes all this; but let us examine the springs below," replied the professor. "You boys want to take a good look at these springs; they are one of the marvels of nature."

At the lower end of the icy rivulet the other horses found the water more to their liking.

The boiling spring was a much larger affair, and from the lower side of this flowed some forty or fifty miner's inches, the spring itself being a pond of water at least twenty feet wide.

"How would you like a swim in that, Percy?" asked Leon.

"Ha! ha! wouldn't need more than one. What


a fortune that would be in an Eastern city!" replied Percy as they hurried by, the dense masses of steam making it anything but pleasant in the vicinity. They followed along the side of the stream of hot water that flowed until it divided, to wind about the sides of another low embankment somewhat similar to that about the icy spring above. Jumping across one of these streams, they stood beside what Obed had called his soap vat.

"Now, here's somethin' as'll puzzle ye, professor. I don't claim as how it's as good as ol'-fashioned, home-made soap, nothin' is, but it'll answer fur these parts," said Obed.

"What do you call the stuff?" asked Leon, as they all gazed at the mass that looked like yellow, liquid mud. The professor turned and looked about him, then down at his feet; stooping, he felt of the ground with his hand.

"Slightly warm here, but I think it's from the proximity of the warm stream of water flowing on each side of us," he answered.

"Looks like nothing but mud in there," said Leon.



"Poor looking soap anyway," added Percy.

"Try it fust, young feller, 'fore ye condemn it; a handful o' that in a bucket o' hot water is as good as any soap ye'll git," returned Obed.

The professor broke off a bit of the crumbling edge of the basin, rubbed it in his hands, even tasted it, to the amusement of the boys.

"This is strongly impregnated with tachhydrite, a chloride of calcium," said the professor.

"What's that?" asked Percy.

"A yellowish carbonate of lime, which, by its nearness to this running stream, is caused to deliquesce."

"Yes, sir."

"The properties of cleansing attributed to it by Obed it certainly possesses to a degree, such a one that I should be afraid to immerse my garments in any very strong solution of it, lest they might disappear as well as all foreign substances," concluded the professor.

"Wall, I'll allow as how it does eat yer fingers er bit when ye use it, but it's better'n none," said Obed.

Below them they took a hurried look at another of these mud springs, whose color, instead of bright yellow, was almost blood red, which was explained by the professor as having probably been caused by the presence of an oxide of iron mingled with the liquid mud; the spring was quite possibly the dead crater of small geyser, as a crumbling cone of silica surrounded it. They now hurried back and sought the best places to picket their horses, but there was little save a browsing amongst the sage brush and greasewood for them. A hearty dinner was then prepared by Pete and enjoyed by all, after which all agreed to spend the remainder of the day at this place, which they christened "Camp Wonderful."

## CHAPTER VIII.

In the proposed investigation the old geologist was more eager than any one of the others. The anticipation upset his usual equanimity, and although in disposition usually as serene as a blind man, now his impatience was such that he could hardly force himself to eat. The others seemed particularly slow in eating that particular dinner, and never before had he noticed what a monstrous gourmand Obed was. Would he ever get enough? The others had all finished, but no insinuating speech would accelerate the motion of Obed's jaws.

"Them bones ain't so old but they'll keep till we git thar!" said Obed as he piled another helping of baked beans upon his plate, in response to the suggestion of haste last made by the professor. Obed knew that they had to wait for him; he was the man of the hour, but after disclosing the resting place of his giant's bones he knew that his importance would be as a flitting shadow. At last a start was made.

Henry West preferred remaining in camp, as his eyes were yet troubled by the strong rays of the sun. The boys, with the professor, followed Obed up the gulch. It seemed to them much farther than Obed had asserted it to be, but then the afternoon was warm and their impatience hastened their gait. Finally a turn of the low ravine brought them to the spot pointed out by Obed as the one, "Whar the giant kicked the bucket!" A break in the overhanging bluff, about half way up, disclosed what certainly appeared as the ends of some gigantic bones protruding; below, amongst the masses of earth and broken rock, was found the skeleton of some prehistoric creature.

The professor seemed a bit nervous, but he had his notebook and pencil in one hand and a tape-measure in the other. As he skipped excitedly around, "In the order of geological time," said the professor, "I think we are viewing an exposure that may safely be accorded to the Mesozoic."

"Reckon as how he's been here some time, sir," replied Obed, but the professor did not notice the interruption.



"That chalk mark up there denotes the cretaceous period, and these bones, the most of which are in a state of splendid preservation, are as great a treasure to me as all the sapphires of the Indies."

"Humph!" ejaculated Obed, "sapphires must er hed er slump in ther market lately."

"There is no trouble in placing these bones correctly; this immense clavicle certainly resembles that of a man, but you see this pre-axial bone of the fore arm is much larger and longer than that tibia there by Leon," said the professor, pointing to the bone on which Leon was standing.

All the bones, though somewhat scattered, were nearly in their relative places, although it was plain to be seen that they had rolled down from the over-hanging side of the disintegrating cliff some ten or twelve feet above them, where a few bones yet protruded.

"Catch hold of this tape line, Percy, and we will get the length of what we can," said the professor, and then he jotted down in his notebook the dimensions of everything in sight.

"He didn't have a very big skull for the size of his other bones," said Leon.

"Shows he must hev been er Shoshone!" said Obed.

"This was never a man, Obed, but the skeleton of an animal something like a sloth; it is called a megatherium. I remember once when in Brazil, going with a party of rascally Gauchos to dig up the bones of one of these fellows; we had literally to chisel the bones out of the rocks. That one was more than nineteen feet from his nose to the end of his tail, but this, I am certain, will measure out more. You see most of the vertebrae of the tail remain there above us still," said the professor.

"This old Meg must hev been a bird!" exclaimed Obed, looking up at the side of the cliff in wonder.

"Not quite a bird; more like a monstrous, fat lizard, although from its bones we find that it had a claw something like that of a bird."

"What did he feed on? It must have been a hot time for the small fry about him," said Leon.

"On the contrary, this fellow was a vegetarian," replied the professor.

"I thought ye said as how he were er megatherium," said Obed.

"A megatherium, Obed, and as he browsed on the leaves and small branches of trees, he is called a vegetarian," explained the professor.

"Oh, I see; I reckon es how I've got that in my head now, sir," said Obed.

"I think this is the first skeleton of a megatherium ever found in North America. If there has been another it must have been lately, for I've never heard of it."

"I did not think them so rare a find," said Leon.

"Very rare indeed, I assure you; I dare say it will not be long before some Institute is sending out an expedition to gather these bones and take them away, when they will be mounted and taken care of," said the professor.

"I think Obed ought to be paid a reward for finding them," said Leon.

"It seems to me that they ought to be con-

sidered as his find, and that he could sell them to any one he wanted to," exclaimed the practical Percy.

"They have no intrinsic value in themselves, but the expense of transportation and mounting in a proper way makes the subject of great value to students," explained the professor.

"Well, I've seen enough of this bone orchard for one, and vote we go back to camp," said Leon.

"So I say, and we'll have a shy at those sage hens we saw coming up here, if we can find them again," added Percy, and after more than one last look by the old geologist at the treasures of past ages, they followed on after Obadiah back to their camp down the gulch. The boys found the same flock of sage hens just above the camp, before they reached it.

"What luck!" exclaimed Leon. "We can get our rifles and eat a good fat hen for supper."

"Obed says they generally taste so strong of sage that you can hardly eat them," said Percy.

"Yes, and he says that these may have flown in here from a long way off, after water,

and might not have been feeding on sage all lately; didn't you, Obed?"

"That's what I said; they may taste lik roast turkey or a sage poultice this time o' t year, jest as ye find 'em. An' I couldn't tell which it'll be by lookin' at ther tracks," s Obadiah.

"You didn't study geology when you were boy, did you, Obed?"

"No, nor nothin' else that ever did me a good. But it seems ter me ye ought ter some o' them old hens with yer six-shooters said Obadiah, as they all stopped to gaze the noble birds, almost as large as turke that walked along in front of them, showin no more fear of man than so many barnyard fowls. The day having been so warm, all h left their rifles in camp, and Leon alone h taken his revolver with him.

"I'm afraid I'll miss, and then you chaps will all guy me," replied Leon.

"No, no, go ahead; any one might miss; they'll be gone surely by the time we get back, if we go after our rifles. Obed says they are

hard to see in the sagebrush, and that he never could find one unless he happened to stumble over it."

"You may try if you want to; I couldn't hit a flock of barn doors with a revolver," said Leon.

"All right, give me the six-shooter; I'll show you how to wing one of those things," responded Percy, taking the weapon from Leon, and walking carefully towards the birds.

"Take yer time, an' git right up on 'em; they've got no more sense than er fool hen!" shouted Obadiah.

"If I can't hit one from here I'll never get one," said Percy, and raising his hand he took careful aim. All watched the slowly moving birds, that entirely oblivious of impending danger were searching for grasshoppers. Their movements were stately and majestic. A second or two elapsed, and then the report of the pistol sounded, bang!

"Did you get him?" cried Leon.

"No, overshot him, I think, I certainly never got a feather that time; they're tame enough, here goes for another shot," returned Percy.

and again a bullet whistled over the heads of the birds, that did not show the slightest alarm.

"Another miss; this thing doesn't seem to carry very well; I'll try another," and after this, stepping yet closer, shot after shot was fired, until the last chamber was emptied, but not a bullet had hit its mark!

"This old pop-gun of yours is going to get us a game-supper one way or another," shouted Percy, and before Leon could beg of him not to throw the revolver, Percy had sent it with unerring aim at the neck of a big fat hen. Percy had not played first base in the home nine the past two seasons for nothing, and the missile did effective work.

The old hen jumped into the air, turned half a dozen summersaults, kicked and struggled, tearing up the sand and gravel, making the greatest of commotions in the sagebrush.

Percy rushed in and grappled with it lest it might eventually get away, and the rest of the covey rose and flew away with a great whirring of wings.

"Hurrah! I've got one!" shouted Percy, hold-

ing up the bird, and with much laughter the others joined him and they all hurried back to camp.

That evening, beneath the professor's canvas, Henry West became more genial. To be alone with one whose age and education were an assurance to him of a certain appreciation suggestive of a sympathy he did not crave, which he would have scorned if offered, softened his rather hard and reserved nature. He had enough of the Indian's nature to make him more or less suspicious, and even in the absence of anything to justify such a feeling, it was a strain upon his artificial training to put this from him. It made him a bit captious, and it was perhaps this as much as the longing for an assurance of his welcome among them, that prompted him to ask the professor that evening:

"Now, my dear sir, are you sure that I am not going to be a bother and a burden to you on this trip of yours?"

"Quite the contrary," replied the professor, "if you are willing to accompany us; you must see for yourself that our numbers are not such



but that your presence is a most enjoyable addition. I assure you that we are the gainers and if you can afford the time, we will not feel as if we were doing you an injustice."

"Thank you; I wish that I felt that all of the others were of the same mind."

"Again I must beg you to remember that I am in supreme command of this little party, that is the 'nervus probandi,' and we need go no farther."

"I thank you."

"I suppose you had the good fortune to acquire a smattering of the Latin language at Carlisle?" said the professor, as much to get Henry West away from the thoughts of any fancied slights, as from a desire to hear more of his past history.

"Oh, yes, that was one of the wise plans of the well-intentioned for the civilization of the Indian, but I have no cause to say a word against it. It was something that I enjoyed immensely, and it was never pressed where inclination was lacking."

"Then you don't approve of their curriculum?"

"I can't say that I do for all their pupils," replied Henry West, with a smile.

"There may be such a thing as over-education for these relatives of yours?"

"Well, yes, but as I have said before it is a most weighty problem."

"It is, indeed; but I can't imagine a better way than to start in with the children."

"So far, so good, but there it ends; what they learn of the white man's civilization and education but makes them dissatisfied. They know that they can't bring their people up to his level, the white man does not want them, except in the way of means to his own ends, and then, when they get back to their own people, they are despised and hated by them. When at Carlisle, I once read a story, entitled, 'A Man Without a Country;' it impressed me very much. I have sometimes thought I could write a good story about a people without a country."

"It would be a sad one and no one would care to read it."

"I am afraid so."

"You ought to devise some means of helping them."

"It seems a hopeless task. I think I can see the way, but it is too narrow and life is too short. Their case seems hopeless. It seems ordained that they slowly pass away, there is not even hope for them as a race."

"Suggest something."

"You see there are so many existing circumstances that, although in themselves a necessity, are in reality the bane of their existence. This anomalous result seems natural in a ward of the Government or in a pensioner of any kind—their independence has been taken from them."

"And yet what the Government allows them is most certainly their due; it belongs to them."

"Yes, but what I mean is, they are a ward."

"This is to keep them from being robbed."

"But it does not inculcate the right kind of pride."

"What would you?"

"Accustom them to the uncertainties of civilization, bring them to look at life from the white man's point of view. They are too close to nature. When they can see the supreme ridiculousness of ghost dances, wearing feath-

ers, painting their faces, the futility and abasement of self-torture, and the necessity for adopting a change, one may have hopes."

"Time works many changes."

"But the amount of time required! My race will not survive that alone!"

"There you become despondent again."

"Look at how the Jews have clung to their customs. I think them the most marvelous race on earth."

"But we don't know that they ever painted their faces or wore feathers in their hair."

"What matters the particular custom they have adhered to?"

"How are they to be induced to change their customs? They are as obstinate as the Jews, and you see how they have adhered to theirs."

"A beginning might be made by inducing them to hold their lands in severalty. It is wrong to foster their ideas of communism; that scheme is a failure with the agitators among the whites—nothing can remain on such a balance; one must either advance to anarchism or step back to the most perfect independence

that centuries have been gradually bringing about."

"Then will commence the greed of the white man for the riches of this world."

"Better to occupy their minds with thoughts of future acquirements than to keep them dwelling on past wrongs."

Here they were interrupted by Leon, who entered the tent laughing heartily, followed by Obadiah, who seemed very indignant, and Percy, who was also exhibiting much amusement.

"A little more decorum, young men. What is the cause of so much merriment?" asked the professor.

"Now, look here, father, Obed says that he was once arrested for being an American citizen, and in our own country!"

"That seems strange."

"He bet me his revolver against mine that he could prove it by the court records, up in some place he calls Bannack," exclaimed Leon, after quiet had been resumed.

"Tut! tut! tut! Leon; how often must I tell you that I do not approve of betting? and that

I will not have any of it here? It is anything but gentlemanly and you must beg our friend Obed to excuse you from your wager," said the professor reprovingly.

"I don't care if I do lose that old revolver any way; it couldn't hit the side of a barn," replied Leon.

"No matter how worthless the stake, the principle is the same. It is always more or less degrading, and leads to worse things. You may give it away or throw it away if you do not want it, but no more of this making bets," said the professor quite seriously.

"All right, sir, but don't you think he must be mistaken?"

"I could not form an opinion unless I heard what Obed has to say about it," said the professor.

"Wal', sir, it were jest this way: Ye see, I were subpoenaed as er witness on er minin' case before ther court up in Bannack City when it were ther capital o' Montany. I were on hand accordin' ter orders, an' marched up afore ther jedge, an' told him as I were there to answer any o' his questions. He told me te

go an' mind my own business till I were called for, er somethin' like that, an' I went out on ther street en loafed around, met er crowd of ol' friends, an' proceeded to hev er good time. I hedn't bin ter town fur six months, an' ther boys wuz glad ter see me. An' we did hev er good time too; by ther next day I thought es how that jedge hed fergotten me; by ther next day I know I'd fergotten ther jedge. Then ther next day, fer them blessed lawyers had been keepin' up ther scrap all ther time, er sheriff comes an' hunts me up an' says they're ready fur me now. I tells him as how, since I've been waitin' on ther jedge fur three days, he kin wait till I gits ready now, an' he kin tell him so fur me.

"Wal, I intended ter be up in that court as soon as ther sheriff, but I were hevin' such er good time with ther boys, I furgits it all in five minutes, an' sure enough ther sheriff gives him my message. Then down he comes agin, an' hes er warrant fur me ter go long with him. This time ther jedge smiles an' says, says he:

" 'I got yer message, but first as regards this claim flin', which ther papers shows as ye cor-

rectly filed, but ther court wants ter know if ye are a native born American citizen or not? An' all I says was, 'Yes, sir, ye bet yer life,' an' he says, says he, 'Mr. Clark, ye kin fine him ten dollars an' he'll stand committed until paid.' I jerks out ther dust an' pays, an' told that clerk that it were ther fust time I ever heard of a man bein' fined fur bein' an American citizen, an' he says ter shet up er I'd git fined agin. Everybody were laughin', but as I didn't see no joke I got away from that as fast as I could, an' I kin prove every word o' what I say," said Obed, puffing and wheezing.

The professor laughed and said he had had no doubt but that Obadiah had been fined. This satisfied Obadiah, and he and the boys left the tent.

"Thar, now, boys, ye see ther perfesser sided in with me fur once, but I could see that thar wuthless Injun jest hated it. Fur some reason he's jest got it in fur me; shouldn't be s'prised ter wake up an' find myself dead any mornin', with er knife stickin' in my back," and with this last growl Obadiah rolled down his blankets and turned in for the night.



## CHAPTER IX.

The first thing in the morning with all camping parties comes the preparation of breakfast and the watering of the horses before they are fed their oats. Obadiah went after the horses that had been picketed about the tents, just far enough apart to prevent any danger of entanglement of the long lariats. They were so used to camp life by this time that all he had to do was to take the ropes from their necks and drive them before him. A horse soon learns where he may expect a feed of oats, and if well treated gives but little heed to the fact that after that comes a day of labor. Patient and faithful, asking only sufficient nourishment to enable him to serve his master, the noble brute toils on to the end.

Percy and Leon, seeing that Obadiah had the horses bunched and was driving them before him, now secured the water pails and went out to help him drive the animals toward the cold spring across the gulch.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Leon, "what makes it look so white all around the upper spring?" It was a cold, clear morning, and the white cloud of steam and vapor that rose from the boiling spring looked like a column of white smoke, while the ground around the ice spring was covered with a white carpet that had not been there the evening before.

"It looks like snow!" cried Percy.

"I believe it is snow!" said Leon.

Snow it certainly was; snow in midsummer. It proved to be an inch, two, four, six inches in the deepest place close to the icy hole.

"Wal, I never see this afore, but then, come ter think o't, I never camped here over night afore; that thar steam hez been blowin' over ther top o' this ice shaft in ther night," explained Obadiah, who yet felt a sort of proprietorship in the entire locality.

"That's it, Obed, as sure as anything. We must bring the professor and Henry West over here before the sun gets high enough to melt it all," cried Percy.

"Ye mought bring ther perfessor over, but I

don't see no use in packin' that thar Injun over here," growled Obadiah.

"You are too prejudiced, Obed," said Leon, filling the buckets with the aid of a tin cup, as the little stream was much too shallow to dip up a bucketful.

"When ye've seen as much o' them wuthless chaps as I hev, ye kin tell me somethin' 'bout em; I never see no good Injuns cep'n dead uns," said Obed, and then, as the horses had stopped drinking and had started in the direction of camp, the boys sent a flight of snowballs after them, to accelerate their speed for the novelty of snowballing at that time of year. The breakfast disposed of, the teams harnessed, the tents down and packed with the rest of the camp equipments, they were about to start, when all discerned at about the same time, quite a large party of Indians appearing on top of the ridge above the springs. Down they came, in anything but orderly array. Indians on horseback and Indians on foot leading horses, ponies packed with squaws and pap-pooes and ponies trailing the customary tra-

vaux, such a nondescript outfit as they had seldom seen, with dogs barking, poles clattering over the rocks, Indians shouting at the ponies they were herding along in front of them and squaws scolding squalling papposes: Everything seemed to contribute to the din.

"Wal', here comes some more o' Mr. West's relations; hope they'll not want transportation with us," growled Obadiah to Percy, who was just mounting his saddle animal.

"Gracious! what a mob of them! there must be a couple of hundred at least!" exclaimed Percy.

"A fine assortment—them's Cheyennes from ther reservation over on ther river," said Obadiah.

"They're not apt to give us any trouble, are they?"

"Reckon not; we'll keep movin' till noon, an' be some way from 'em by that time; they're goin' down below ther hot spring ter wash an' tan hides. Ye see they must 've left camp pretty early ter git here by this time. They'll make a day of it here an' pull out agin afore

night; them fellers wouldn't camp here all night fur no money."

"Why not?"

"Fraid o' sperits."

"I say, Obed," called the professor at this juncture, "wouldn't we better hurry up and get away from here before those fellows come over?" indicating as he spoke a couple of bucks, followed by some squaws with their coterie of youngsters, who were crossing over to them.

"Mought's well give 'em er chance ter do some chin-music er they'll think we're skeered of 'em," replied Obadiah, and Professor Garceau drove up his wagon close to Obadiah's, so as to be all together, thinking that no matter how peaceably disposed they might be, it was as well to be cautious.

The Indians crowded about them, examining everything, and offering to trade moccasins for tobacco. This is always a desirable exchange, and some bargains were made, the old professor giving to the squaws some trinkets that greatly pleased them. The two bucks seemed much interested in Henry West; one of them,

a wrinkled, bronzed old fellow, clad only in a buffalo hide held together by a strap about his waist, had a quiver, made of an otter skin and full of arrows, dangling at his back; in one hand he held a large bow, and with the other he amused himself by jerking continually at the buckskin thongs tied about the lower jaw of his pony. He had a most villainous countenance, and when he left the side of Henry West it was with no pleasant expression upon his face.

"What was he saying? He did not seem to regard you very kindly," said Professor Garceau.

"That Indian is called 'Two Moons'; he belongs to the Standing Rock Agency. We have met before. He is down in this part of the country trying to stir up dissension. He is predicting a general uprising among the northern tribes of Indians, old Sitting Bull has sent him around on a visit to all the other agencies—he wants the young men to join him on a general buffalo hunt up there. I know that the Cheyennes and Shoshones will have nothing to do

with it, nor will the Osage tribes; they are well-to-do, the last are rich, and don't want to risk their present condition. They are going down below the springs to have a medicine dance, and will be guided by the Great Spirit. I hope they'll have sense enough to keep out of trouble," explained Henry West, but he seemed much troubled.

"They are always predicting uprisings, but what else was he saying; he seemed very angry?"

"He was angry at finding me with you; we have met before and could never agree. He will make trouble if he can," replied Henry West. Their attention was now attracted by the sound of an altercation between Obadiah and the other Indian, whom Henry West also knew; he was *Lame Deer*, the chief of a band of *Cheyenne Sioux*. These are considered by the northern branches of the *Upsaroka* family to be renegades and traitors, but they are now trying to win them back.

Obadiah was certainly having a most exciting conversation with *Lame Deer*, although it was more by signs than orally.

"I reckon I've given it ter him straight enough, an' I went back on nothin' I did," exclaimed Obadiah, as Lane Deer coolly turned his back upon him. "It's er long time since I run across this old hoss-thief," jerking his thumb over his shoulder in Lane Deer's direction, and laughing most heartily. "Ye see I asked him if he didn't want ter swap me his pinto pony fur some ca'tridges an' terbacker; then it came back ter me as how he were ther same Injun as I steered er bunch o' high privates arter up at Terry's Landing, fur runnin' off some Gover'ment muels; then he remembered my face—ye see good-lookin' chaps ain't so blamed plenty nowadays, an' he felt sort o' wicked in his heart, an' I told him ter take er sneak ter himself." Here Obed drew a long breath and motioned to the squaws on the other side to get out of his way. "Better git er move on ye afore I say somethin' I'll be sorry for. Ye see," he resumed to the professor, "this other beauty says that if we're on the make an'll go on up an' jine Sitting Bull in a bit of a scrap,—he says ther's quite a number o' white men what's got it in fur ther sojers have jined



him a'ready,—arter he's cleaned up ther whites he'll whack up square with them as stood i with him,—something like a hundred an' sixt acres an' a Gover'ment muel, I reckon. Then fellers is allers goin' ter do somethin' wonderful. Let me pick er dozen men an' I'll clear ther country of 'em," growled Obadiah.

Lame Deer, who had drawn his blanket tightly around him and turned his back as before stated, to show his dislike and contempt, now turned as if he had thought better of it and taking from some mysterious fold a well worn pack of cards, held up three fingers touched his pony on the neck, then pointed to the near horse in Obed's team, then to the ground.

Obed very well understood this to be an invitation for him to stake one of his team against three head of ponies at a game of cards. Obed raised both hands closed above his head and slowly drew them apart, shaking his head sadly. He meant to tell Lame Deer by this that he had not time, no matter how greatly he might have been pleased with a so-

cial game. His words in English may not have exactly corresponded: "I don't hev no luck at keerds no more, an' I don't play 'em, so that settles it."

A supercilious smile crept over the Indian's face, showing the contempt that Obadiah knew he felt at this refusal. To refuse absolutely any game of chance is, to an Indian, something akin to showing the white feather. Obed got down from his seat in the wagon, ostensibly to shorten a check-rein on one of his horses, and then, catching the watchful eye of the Indian, drew from his pocket a buckskin string some three feet long. Leaning against the flank of his horse, he held the two loose ends in his left hand, and with the right gave the loop a throw and a twist so as to make two openings in the apparently tangled string; these he adjusted so that they looked alike, and then, placing his index finger in one of the loops, he pulled the two ends with the other hand. The string caught itself tightly around the finger. Again the string was thrown—this time the finger was not caught. Lame Deer was interested at once. A very simple and honest device! He

saw the thing done once more and felt that this was just in his line. He took from the hand of one of the squaws standing near him a pair of moccasins and laid them down upon the ground in front of Obed, who drew from the depths of his tobacco pouch a small handful of tobacco, and carefully poured the precious weed into one of the moccasins. He then threw the loops again several times, sometimes causing one loop to catch about the finger, and then the other, and then it failed to catch on either side. Finally Lame Deer uttered a "Ugh!" and jabbed a big, dirty brown finger into one of the loops. Obadiah pulled as before, and to the Indian's delight, the string caught about it tightly. A smile of satisfaction wreathed itself about his stoical features, and nodding his head, he pointed to Obadiah's tobacco pouch. Obadiah accepted the challenge, and as the one handful had represented fair odds against the moccasins, he produced two handfuls and poured this in with the first amount won by the Indian. Then he threw the loops again, with great care and seriousness.

Lame Deer, having won before by choosing

the loop nearest him, now chose that nearest to Obadiah, who pulled the strings, causing the looped end to glide by, leaving the tip of Lane Deer's finger closely pressed to the horse's hide. Obadiah had won; this was met most good-naturedly by the Indian, who looked at the doubled stakes now belonging to Obadiah, turned to his squaw and took from her a fine buffalo robe that she had on her pony's back, tied behind the saddle; this he threw down on the ground. The bet was made, and this time Lane Deer was successful. The stakes were his; he was fast getting an idea of how the thing was done, and nodded eagerly to Obadiah, who produced his revolver and held it up, a generous stake against all on the ground. Once more Lane Deer thought he saw his advantage, but this time he lost. Slightly chagrined, but nothing daunted, he motioned his squaw to pull the saddle from the pinto pony that had first taken Obadiah's eye, wagered this against all, and as quickly lost.

What next? thought Obadiah. He knew that the advantage was his, knew that the Indian could not see through the trick—what next?

Lame Deer looked behind him at the o squaw, a hideous old hag with tangled ma dropping down over her shoulders. He touch her on the back, pushing her toward the fast accumulating pile of stakes upon the ground

"Good gracious! he's going to put up his squaw!" cried Leon, thinking that it was high time he called his father's attention to these proceedings, but before this could be done the tricky loop was again thrown and Obadiah the winner. It was now becoming quite interesting, when Professor Garceau interfered.

"Well, well, well! what does this mean?"

"I've jest won er few odds an' ends off ther old chap. I think as how this squaw will make er good hand round camp, an' if ye think she don't earn her feed we kin swap her off fur er pony with ther fust lot of Injuns we run inter," replied Obadiah with the utmost nonchalance.

"Why, Obed, this will never do; you must give all this back—I can never allow such a thing."

"He's too game ter take back er thing as he's lost in er gamble."

"Then banter him for one more play and let him win it all back; I insist upon it," said the professor in that authoritative tone that must be obeyed, as Obadiah well knew. Obadiah may have been touched by the serio-comic look on the face of Lame Deer, or by the feeling that he held the fate of all results in his own hands.

At any rate, he pointed without further to-do at the other squaw, who was young, and as far as the Indian woman might be called, most comely. She was evidently the favorite wife, as all kinds of ornaments bedecked her person, and the trappings of the horse she rode showed signs of much skill and expense.

Lame Deer understood only too well that this was strictly a white man's game; there was nothing wrong in it, it was all quite fair, but no Indian was able to play it. He looked at the young squaw regretfully, then at Obadiah, who, he felt, would taunt him with a lack of nerve; his dread of ridicule, his abhorrence of anything looking like a want of spirit, prevailed, and he motioned to the young woman to stand beside the older one. Obadiah threw the loop, and Lame Deer stepped forward. If

anyone sought for a sign of trepidation, or for the slightest display of emotion as Lame Deer calmly placed his finger in one of the loops and nodded for Obadiah to draw, he was disappointed.

"Perfessor, I'm ther loser of my revolver by this," said Obadiah as he pulled the string, which fastened itself about the finger of the Indian. Lame Deer had won!

There was no lack of emotion shown by the squaws, the youngsters and papposes, who had been busily engaged in front of the team, catching the big, bloated crickets that abounded in that part of the country, of which, Obadiah had just assured the boys, they usually made soup. They yelled with delight as they hurriedly resaddled the pinto ponies and followed His Serene Highness, their lord and master, the arbiter of their fate, down the gulch to the spot that was fast assuming the look and proportion of an Indian encampment.

"Jest-my luck!" growled Obadiah to himself, as he climbed back into the wagon. "An' all on account o' that thar Henry West. Any fool

could see it was from his interferin'. It's one more score I got agin him."

The professor shouted to Obadiah as they all started: "Thank you, Obed; I'll give you that Smith & Wesson you admired so much," and Obadiah felt a trifle appeased.

Just as the Indians were leaving, Two Moons drew an arrow from his quiver, and breaking it in two, leaned over the withers of his pony and handed the barbed, pointed end to Henry West, who accepted it with a smile, but said nothing.

Our party were obliged to drive up the gulch a short distance in order to cross it, on account of the treacherous nature of the ground below the spring.

"What did that fellow give you the arrow for?" asked Percy. "What a pretty piece of flint!"

"Well, I am sorry they all saw me with you. As Two Moons could not make me his friend, he has let his resentment get the better of him, and he begs me to consider him as my most bitter enemy," replied Henry West.



"How awfully kind! Give me the arrow; I like to keep it as a souvenir!" exclaimed Leo.

"Now, I'm not superstitious," replied Henry West, "but I'd rather not give it to you."

"Well, then, lend it to me; I'll keep it for you until you want it," said Leon, and taking the arrow, he tore out the barbed point and threw the broken shaft on the ground.

"It looks as if it were made of black glass."

"That is obsidian, a species of volcanic glass," said the professor.

"A nasty looking thing to have through one's ribs," said Leon.

"As bad as a rifle ball," remarked the professor.

"I have shot many an arrow head like that clear through a buffalo; indeed my people prefer shooting buffalo with the bow and arrow, rather than with the rifle," said Henry West.

"The buffalo are getting scarce in Wyoming," said the professor.

"Yes, indeed, they do not stay in here in the summer any more; all drift north of the Missouri, and from there to the Saskatchewan;

their days, like those of the red man, are numbered. They are fast disappearing before the encroachments of the whites, and, as I know their habits and requirements, I should not be surprised to see them extinct in less than twenty years. I cannot understand what protects them now from the greed of the white man. An Indian kills them only according to his needs. Why have the whites allowed them to remain so long? A dozen men could kill every buffalo on the plains in one winter. Each raw hide is worth five dollars to him—there is a small fortune for some one; what matters it if the red man starves and freezes in consequence? I am looking every winter to see the slaughter. It is only delayed; it is sure to come," said Henry West sadly.

None knew better than he how much the Indian depended on the buffalo. He knew the Indian's preference for the skin lodge; had he not seen the pretty cottages put up by the Government at Washington for the comfort of the Indian, used by that unappreciative individual as a stable for his ponies, while he adhered to the luxuries of the smoky tee-pee of his fore-

fathers for himself and his family? Had he not seen the seed grain furnished him to raise a future supply from, fed with reckless hand to his ponies, and the improved farming machinery strewn about, rusting in sunshine and rain?

"It is a hard problem, Henry, and I am just cynical enough to think that philanthropists are not going to be rewarded in this world," said the professor.

"Yes, but the pleasure found in the most meager bit of success would be a sufficient reward. As you say, the problem is a hard one, and I dare say history is about to repeat itself in a survival of the fittest."

"Yes, it has ever been a stronger race driving out a weaker one. Take the entire history of your own race. The first that we hear of them is, that the Aztecs came from the Northwest in the twelfth century and conquered the Toltecs; overrunning what is now known as Mexico, assimilating with, predominating, finally absorbing the race until the arrival of Cortez in the sixteenth century."

"When that merciless robber in his turn, in a way only known to the whites, wantonly destroyed a harmless people, their arts and industries, not even sparing the literature of a race that might have thrown some light on the past generations of a newly discovered hemisphere."

"Ah, yes, that was the saddest part of it all, the loss of all that might have been of so much use to scholars. I think we ought to camp here for noon; there seems to be better feed here than we have met with today and the horses are getting tired," said the professor, breaking off, and calling to Obadiah and Pete in the lead wagon to make a halt.

After the dinner had been partaken of, their immediate course of procedure became the topic of conversation, and it was at length decided to proceed at once to the head waters of the south fork of the river, which they did, camping near the trail taken by Chief Joseph's men on their return from their mission to the Utes and Pawnees.

Here they found so much snow that they pitched camp with difficulty, and Professor

Garceau proposed that they should rest over here for a day, and prospect a little. Obadiah shouldered his rifle and set out, saying that he was near to his find, and would try to locate it.

After a couple of hours he was seen returning, a smile of satisfaction upon his face.

"Well," he exclaimed, "I've solved yer problem, beyond all concussion—snow er no snow, we don't hev ter go no further."

"And why, Obed? What have you got?" asked Professor Garceau, impressed by the guide's earnestness, in spite of the absurdity of his language.

"Jest what I say; I've found yer sapphire mine!"

Obadiah had reason to be pleased with the sensation his words created.

"Where? Take us to it! You don't tell us you've found indications of a sapphire deposit!" were the exclamations hurled at him.

"Indercashuns be blowed! I've got ther pure quill; sapphires by ther bushel, jest as I told ye. If ther things is wuth two bits we'll all be as rich as mud in Snake river!" shouted Obadiah, gesticulating wildly.

"Oh, come, Obed, what are you giving us?" asked Percy.

"Tain't more'n four miles from here, so come on an' I'll show ye!"

"We will have Pete take us all over there at once," said the professor.

It was not long before they were speeding over the luxuriant grasses of the divide, and in half an hour's time Obadiah called a halt.

"Here ye be, an' if ther ain't enough fur ye all, ye orter be cut up inter ham an' bacon!" exclaimed Obadiah forcibly.

"Where is it, Obed?" asked the professor, looking around.

"Whar is it? Why, it's here, can't ye see fur yerself? Right erbout ye, see? All them little scatterin' ones, jest like them in ther bags."

"Sapphires?" questioned the professor.

"Sapphires!" echoed Henry West.

"Sapphires! sapphires!" shouted the boys, beginning to pelt each other with the stones that lay scattered in profusion.

"Yes, sapphires!" reiterated Obed doggedly.

"And are these your sapphires, Obed?" asked Professor Garceau.

"Did ye think they was pertaters?" retorted the old man, getting indignant.

"No, Obed, but you were mistaken; these are only rock crystals," and the professor dropped in some disdain the handful he had gathered.

"Well, I warn't mistaken erbout one thing, ther's no lack of 'em."

"I have found something of far greater importance than the crystals," said Henry West, coming up with a serious face.

"And what is that, Henry?"


"Traces of a dozen or more Apaches! There are no squaw tracks, and I fear they might mean mischief, should they find us here. We must return to camp as quickly as possible."

## CHAPTER X.

That night for the first time they felt the necessity of some one's standing guard until morning. This most disagreeable duty was divided among them all. At first its novelty suggested any amount of sport to the boys, who had been allotted the first two guard mounts. There were enough in the party to permit the professor's being excused from duty.

As Leon and Percy could not agree as to which should precede the other in his watch, they settled the dispute by each accompanying the other; this very sociable arrangement caused the hours to go by most pleasantly, and midnight came before they were aware.

Nothing had been seen and nothing heard by the boys, save the distant howling of a wolf or coyote. One of these prowlers can make night most hideous with his serenading, and although it was not the first time that the boys had heard it, they could not repress a shudder when the blood curdling cries fell on their ears.





They kept up a constant fire of conversation in low tones, and although they were not sorry when twelve o'clock came, yet taking the experience all around, they had rather enjoyed their nocturnal vigil.

It was midnight, and tired and sleepy they hurried to Obadiah's tent and awakened him. The remainder of the night was divided among the others. All this precaution proved unnecessary, so far as the general verdict was rendered about the breakfast table.

During that day's travel a most careful watch was kept, but no further traces of hostile Indians were discovered. Two days more of travel over a rather rough country brought them to the banks of the Gros Ventre River.

Here a more permanent camp was pitched and preparations were begun for the construction of the great raft that was to carry them down on the turbulent waters before them.

"If thar's any one thing I like it's ter git er boy at er grindstone," remarked Obadiah, picking up his axe, and drawing his thumb across its edge, with many dubious shakes of his head.

"Why so, Obed?" asked Leon, who was immediately seized with a desire to go fishing. They had had no fish for a long time, and he knew his father would be delighted with a change in the bill of fare.

"Wal', I'll tell ye. Thar's allers a certing amount o' nat'ral meanness in er boy that he can't help pesterin' other folks with. Then when I gits one on 'em ter turnin' a grindstone fur me, I comes near gittin' a bit even," replied Obadiah, eyeing the fish line that was making its appearance from Leon's pocket, with suspicion.

"Now, look here, Obed, I wouldn't mind offering to turn that old stone for you, if you didn't always lean so hard on it. There's no use in it at all, and you'd sharpen your axe just as fast, or faster, I think,—"

"That's all ye know erbout it, an' ye kin jest roll up that bit o' line agin, fur two reasons. One is as ther river is so muddy ye'll not git er bite, an' ther next is, ye've got ter turn this stone fur me if I'm ter cut any o' them dry firs up on that mounting side."

"I'll try the river, anyway. Percy is around somewhere, and I know he's just dying to turn the stone for you," said Leon. Here the professor came around the side of the tent, and Leon was induced to reverse his decision by his father's saying:

"Now look here, Leon, you came along to help when you can."

"Yes, sir, I'll turn it for him, but someone ought to get us a mess of fish for dinner."

"The fish will keep. Now, Obed, how long is it going to take us to make this raft?" asked the professor.

"Wal, I reckon as how I kin git enough o' them dry firs cut ter make er good safe row o' logs, in about two days."

"That's doing pretty fast work."

"Oh, that's nothin' extra, an' I think as how, with ther two teams haulin' 'em down, they kin erbout keep up ter my choppin'."

"Then to get them shaped into a raft—I don't see how we shall ever be able to launch the thing after we get it built," said the professor dubiously.


"Ha! ha! ha! Why, bless ye, we jest roll them logs inter ther river one by one, an' pin 'em together in the water!" Obadiah laughed heartily..

"That's possible, if they don't get away from us; that current is very rapid."

"I'll go bail as they don't go down the stream until we all gits good an' ready, an' now I reckon the edge on that thar axe'll do till noon; then I'll give Percy his share o' turnin'," said Obadiah with a chuckle.

A grove of firs through which the fire had run, some few years previous to the coming of our voyageurs, offered the most desirable material for a raft. They were straight as a ship's mast, smooth and light and it was no trouble to drag them down to the water's edge as fast as Obadiah felled them.

By noon of the second day they had that spot by the river selected as the best place for building the raft, literally covered with the beautiful fir poles. Obadiah was an old lumberman, and with Pete as assistant the logs were speedily rolled into the water and pinned to each other with cross poles.



Then came the loading of their wagons, which was done by sliding them down on two fir poles, the banks being precipitous and undermined by the rapid current, which at this time of the year was made most treacherous by the melting of the snow in the high mountains.

The professor and Henry West had but little to do with the building of this rude craft.

"You and I, Henry," remarked the professor, "are too old to learn how to use an axe, like these fellows."

"Quite likely," returned Henry West, with a smile that might have meant almost anything, had the professor known more of the Indian's nature.

"But what have you learned in the mountains, Henry? You have been away all day, and have scarcely spoken since your return. I suppose you must be about tired out with your long walk," said the professor.

"I am a bit tired, but more anxious than I can tell you. I am glad that it has taken so little time to build the raft. We must lose none in getting away from here."

"No immediate danger, is there? Have you seen more signs which you think have been made by hostile Indians? I think you may have been mistaken the other day."

"No, I am not in error. I went back a long distance, nearly as far as our last camp. I saw two small bands of Indians going through the mountains, and was fortunate enough not to be seen by them, though they passed me so closely that I recognized them as being young braves from the Apache Reservation, and the same chief that gave me the broken arrow was with them. He had stopped to examine some sign in the heavy timber, and was straggling along quite a distance behind the others. He little dreamed how close he was to me. By the laws of our race, his life was mine; I could have sent a bullet through his heart and lost myself in one of the mountain fastnesses without trouble."

"That would have been murder, Henry," said the professor, with horror depicted in his face.

"No, no, legalized warfare according to the recognized laws of the red man. His broken

arrow has told me what to expect from him, when the chance comes his way; it was a challenge to the death, time, place and manner for either to choose. I can not say that I was not tempted, but the effect of the white man's training and his religion mastered the savage in me, and I prayed to be forgiven the weakness."

"So much for the teachings of the whites! But your news alarms me; we must get everything ready and leave here before daylight."

"That is what I am thinking; everything is on the raft now but the tents and provisions——"

"Yes, Obed says that all he has to do is to let go the ropes and we are off. I wish the raft had been made of two tiers of logs, then it would have held up the horses as well, but Obed thinks in case of getting on the rocks it would not do to chance the stock."

"I think he is right about that; our horses are our main dependence," said Henry West.

Now that everything was ready for their departure, all felt somewhat excited and anxious for the coming of the next day.

## CHAPTER XI.

It was hardly daylight when everything was on the raft and the ropes untied from their fastenings. On account of the limited capacity of the raft Obadiah had been sent over the mountain trail with the horses, and at last the party was safely off, floating down the rapid stream.

The professor was virtually in command, although Henry West acted as pilot, and was expected to take command should an emergency arise.

"Pete, you and Leon may handle the stern oar, and Henry West, with Percy, will manage the forward one. I'll climb into this wagon and keep a sharp lookout."

"All right, you're commander; the first man that mutinies, you'll hang overboard," replied Leon.

"No foolishness, Leon; you may prove an easy craft to manage, but you won't," said his father.



"I do not think we shall have trouble; the oars work well. Give her a little stronger push, Pete; keep your end well up stream, that's it—we'll get out more in the middle, so we can handle her to better advantage when we round that first point of rock," called Henry West from the forward end of the raft.

"A little harder, did you say?"

"Yes, just a trifle."

They were now moving at a rapid rate, but going with the stream, the waters no longer dashed over the stern as at first. The sound of splashing waves was replaced by gentle paddling murmurs, broken only by the dipping of the heavy pole oars.

"Oh, I say, Percy, isn't this just too jolly for anything?" called Leon, enjoying to the utmost the novelty of the situation.

"Mighty pleasant for a change," answered his friend, "I'll wager Obed would rather be here than climbing those mountains."

"We're coming down on that point like the wind, aren't we getting too close?" asked the professor.

"No, I think we're about right," answered the Indian. "You see as soon as we pass that point the current in the river is very abrupt, and there it will be doubled in power, with a tendency towards the other bank."

They were now close to the point, which was a perpendicular cliff at the base of which the water boiled up furiously, the white foam dashed in all directions. The raft went faster and faster, rolling and rocking as if the logs would be torn from their fastenings.

The rough waves broke over the clumsy craft, and the stern was lifted high out of the water, then the professor shouted in shrill accents of terror:

"Look out! Look out for the rock ahead!"

Pete dropped his oar, and ran to the forward end of the raft to judge for himself of their danger, and Leon found himself unequal to the task of steadying the raft alone.

"Back to your oar!" shouted Henry West, his black eyes flashing, as with superhuman effort he managed to keep the raft from swinging about and presenting a broadside to the dangerous rock some hundred yards below them.

"We're lost, let's jump and swim for it!" cried Pete, starting towards the edge of the raft.

"Back to your oar, or you're a dead man!" shouted Henry West, drawing his revolver, as he lifted his oar from the water to make another sweep.

Pete did not stop to argue the matter, whether from fear of the convincing weapon of the Indian, or as better judgment prompted, is difficult to say, but the next moment he was back at his oar, pulling as if his life depended upon it, as indeed it did.

The professor quickly climbed down from his lofty seat, his face pale and troubled, but his voice again steady.

"Can we escape that rock, Henry? We are heading directly towards it."

"There is no danger if we keep cool. That's enough, Pete!" called Henry West, as the raft swung about to its former position.

"All right; I can take chances if you can," yelled Pete in reply.

The roar of the water now made their voices hardly audible. Henry West placed his lips close to the ear of the professor, and said:

"You go back to Pete and watch for me to raise my hand. When I make the signal then help swing the raft towards the point. We've got to go through the narrow channel, it is our only chance. Hurry now, there is no time to lose!"

Hardly had the professor made his way to the stern of the raft when the Indian raised his hand.

Throwing his weight on the oar as he hurriedly explained their plan, he pulled with all his might.

The raft needed but little assistance, but it needed it at the right time. Another stroke with the heavy oars and she swung into the narrow channel, one more and they were passing the rock; the corner of the raft grazed it, but was not damaged.

"My, but that was a close call!" exclaimed Percy, panting from his exertions.

"Yes," said Henry West quietly, "our raft might be more easily managed were the logs some three feet shorter; it is a trifle wide."

"Pete got pretty badly frightened, didn't he?"

"You can't tell that, he thought the w  
the safer place, at that moment; I might h  
thought the same, but all my thoughts v  
given to getting the raft safely by that ro

"Are we apt to get to the rapids before  
tie up for the night?"

"Hardly; I think they are fully half  
down."

The river presented an endless panorama  
grand scenes, and the next two hours seemed  
fly.

"Look! there's Obed down there! just bey  
that long line of willows, see?"

"Where? I do not see him."

"Farther down than you are looking, do  
you see that long line of willows overhangi-  
the bank? Well, about a hundred yards  
yond."

"Ah, yes, I see him and those are the horses  
feeding on the bluff at the right. Oh, Pete!"

"Hello!" replied Pete, a little sullenly. He  
had not spoken since the incident of passing the  
rock. Although his resentment at the uncere-  
monious action of the Indian had passed, yet

an intense shame for his own thoughtlessness remained.

"Obed is below, and we want to swing in towards the bank."

"All right, in she goes," replied Pete, bending to his oar with a will.

"Push her in!" yelled Obadiah, from the bank.

"Catch this rope!" called the professor, and he threw the coiled strands towards the shore. The end fell into the water.

"Take my place, I can throw it," exclaimed ete, hurriedly coiling the rope, and throwing it with better success. Obadiah grabbed the end as it was being drawn again under the turbid waters, scrambled up the bank, and rushed to the nearest tree.

"Let out more rope!" he yelled, as he hastily wound the end about the trunk, but the rope was short, and he was unable to make more than two turns before the increasing tension raised the rope clear of the water, putting a terrible strain upon his muscles.

"It's all out, tie it, quick!" shouted Pete.

"I can't, ther rope's slippin'!" panted

Obadiah, who with feet braced and heels digging into the loose gravel, was being dragged around the tree.

"Hold to it! hold to it!" cried Pete.

"Don't let her go!" screamed Leon.

"Stay with her, Obed!" shouted Percy, courageously, seizing a long pole, and trying to push the raft in from the far side, while the professor was running up and down trying to cover some means of facilitating the landing.

"She's er goin'," groaned Obadiah, and then the rope slipped entirely from his hands.

The raft being free from restraint, started ahead, the weight of the rope pulled the coiled end around the tree trunk with lightning-like rapidity, and as Obadiah straightened to recover his equilibrium the flying rope end came around like a club and struck him fairly across his somewhat prominent abdomen.

With a shriek of agony Obadiah fell backwards and rolled down the steep bank into the water, disappearing under the seething blackness as if he had been an immense boulder.

For a moment they were paralyzed by the sudden and awful accident.

"Oh, heavens, he is lost!" moaned Prof. Garceau.

Pete caught up a box and threw it overboard, then a short bit of dry log and one or two loose articles that would float.

The raft was once more sweeping down with the current, and receding from the bank. The professor, with Pete and the two boys, had been so steadily watching the spot where Obadiah had disappeared, that they had not noticed the movements of Henry West. A splash in the water near the end of the raft directed their attention. Henry West had disappeared!

In a moment he was seen in the water, his long black braids floating behind him, as with quick, energetic strokes he swam towards the shore. Although making little headway against the churning waters, yet he breasted them like one accustomed to such streams.

When about half way to the shore he heard the shout of the professor:

"There he is, Henry! Just beyond you!"

The young Indian saw the bulky form of Obadiah tumbled about in the water, and with



a few strokes he reached him. It was the work of a moment for those sinewy brown arms to bring Obadiah's unconscious form to the raft, where the others speedily pulled them both aboard.

In a short time Obadiah was groaning, gasping, coughing and spluttering the water from his mouth, his big fists pawing the air in his endeavors to recover his breath.

"How do you feel, Obed?" inquired Prof. Garceau.

"Oh, oh, oh," groaned Obadiah, rolling over and over on the raft.

"I'm afraid he's badly hurt," said Percy.

"Throw some cold water in his face," suggested Pete.

"No, no!" gasped Obadiah, doubling himself up in an agony of fear.

"Of course not; he had enough cold water," said the professor.

"He'll hate it worse than ever," said Leon, with a grin.

"Come, come, Leon, he might have been drowned. He had a very narrow escape. If it had not been for Henry——"

"I think the blow was the worse."

"Yes," said Pete, "it sounded as if that rope struck a big bag of wind, or a barrel of——"

"Oh, shet up!"

"Ha! you've come to, have you? I thought that would bring you," laughed Pete, as Obadiah sat up, clasping with both of his huge hands the wounded part of his anatomy.

"All hands to the oars again!" cried Henry West, now dressed and at his post, "we must make a landing before we reach that canyon ahead."

"The current is changing; we are going in to the bank without any trouble," said Leon, as he took his place at the oars.

"Wasn't that awfully hard swimming?" asked Percy.

"Not so hard as it looked. If you make no attempt to go against the current it is much like swimming in still water," answered Henry West.

"I should not have cared for a bath in there all the same."

"No? but I learned in just such a stream,

when I learned to swim, so it was nothing for me. I don't think Obed was much hurt by the water."

"He seems to have recovered; he's helping at the other oar."

"Yes, he's all right. Now if we can get in close enough there's a small tree that will hold us. Two more sweeps and I'll take the rope and jump with it.

"Don't you fall into the water," laughed Leon.

They were now within a few feet of the bank. Seizing the rope, the Indian leaped on shore and before the raft had begun to pull on the cable he had it securely fastened.

The raft swung in close to the bank, and the voyagers again set foot on terra firma. After it was made doubly secure by tying the other end, the tents were put up for the night, and Pete began in haste to prepare some supper. Obadiah, now quite recovered, walked back to where he had left the horses, to bring them nearer to camp.

Not far away a small mountain stream came

dashing down and mingled its clear, sparkling waters with the muddy river.

"Let's get our lines and have a try for some fish before the sun goes down," suggested Percy.

"That's right; I'm with you," responded Leon, "and we can find some good poles among those willows."

"You cut some and I'll hunt up the lines."

"Tell father that we're going up the gulch, so he'll not worry about us. We can get back in time for supper."

"If the fish stop biting."

"Oh, if they bite at all we should have a fine string between us by that time."

The poles were soon out and trimmed, the lines adjusted and the proper flies selected when, with visions of large speckled trout jumping and snapping at their hooks, the boys started up the gulch. The walking was good, and although there was some of the tangled undergrowth always found in such places, yet there were many open spots, affording a fine opportunity for the casting of a fly.

Soon the boys found a likely pool, the upper

end of which was a dashing ripple where the water fell over the rocks. Matted grass and trailing vines fringed moss-covered rocks, and rose bushes reflected their loveliness in the limpid stream.

"Here's the home of the mountain trout! Nothing less than a four-pounder at the first throw!" exclaimed Leon, smashing down the brush to enable him to handle his pole without tangling his line.

"You're sure to get him if you only make noise enough," replied Percy, coolly waiting to see what luck Leon might have before unwinding his own line from the pole.

"Oh, they don't mind a little noise like that half so much as seeing you stand there like a Stoughton bottle with your shadow on the water," said Leon, now casting his fly.

"Say, Percy! can you stand back a little; if you don't want to fish yourself, you needn't spoil my sport. Stand back a bit, won't you?" But Percy made no reply. "What's the matter with you, anyway?" and Leon, who had pulled in his line, sent it again flying through the air, now landing the fly most scientifically in the

very centre of the pool. "I say, Percy, are you stage-struck? What are you gazing at up there? There! I've hooked one! See! It's a whopper!" shouted the boy, pulling on his line till his pole was bent nearly double.

Percy did not turn his head, although a whisper of "Keep cool!" came from him.

Leon was too greatly interested in landing his fish to notice the huskiness of his friend's voice.

His excited pulling brought the fish to the top of the water, and then the tightly drawn line and bent pole sent it flying through the air and into the branches of the trees behind him.

"I've got him!" cried Leon, dropping his pole and running into the bushes to the fish that was dangling from the line overhead. It was a beauty, a salmon trout, speckled all over, and would have weighed all of three pounds. He extricated his line and went back to where Percy was still standing.

"What's the row, old boy? Gone daft, or what is up? Just cast your eye upon this speckled fellow. Fine, isn't he? Why don't you take a throw?" asked Leon, as he held up the fish.

"Keep still, can't you? Lord help us! Did you see it?" gasped Percy, his face white with fear, and his eyes fixed upon an opening in the bushes over the rocks above them.

"What's the racket? I don't see anything," answered Leon, staring about, "got it bad?"

"It is gone," said Percy, with a shudder. "It was awful. I thought I must be dreaming at first, but I saw it again. It is the most horrible thing I ever saw. I could only see its head and shoulders and its little fiery red eyes. Horrible! It looked human! I wish we had our guns!"

"What could it have been?"

"I declare I don't know. You see I was just thinking about taking—— Oh, there it is again, see!" and Percy grasped Leon's arm and pointed upwards.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Leon.

"Do you see?"

"Yes, let's get out of here."

"Come on!"

It would be difficult to say which of the boys was the more frightened, as their retreat was sounded by an unearthly scream, a frightful yell of defiance from the creature on the rocks above.

## CHAPTER XII.

The boys did not stop for their poles nor the speckled trout flapping about on the ground at their feet, but dashed through the brush and undergrowth, as if pursued by a legion of demons, and in less than ten minutes were back in camp relating their marvelous tale to interested listeners.

"What do you think it could have been, or were you too badly frightened to think?" asked Prof. Garceau.

"We weren't frightened at all, were we, Percy?"

"Oh, no; ye jest see all ye wanted and then ye legged it fur camp. He! he! he! ye wasn't scart any; oh, no!" exclaimed Obadiah, enjoying a laugh at the boys.

"It might have been Indians," suggested Pete.

"More apt to have been Rustlers from the Yellowstone," retorted Henry West, indignantly.



"Nary use spekerlatin'; les' git er gait on an' go back ter ther identercal spot an' find th scarcrow."

"Supper will be ready in five minutes," interrupted Pete.

"Wall, I'll jest go up an' prospec' erbout leetle, an' ye kin hev yer supper fust," and Obadiah took his rifle over his shoulder and started off up the gulch.

Obadiah walked more quickly than usual; he did not like being late for his supper, but knowing the country he thought it but prudent to look about, and not be caught napping. Har! what was that? Crunching, guttural sounds. What were they? No bird or beast of Obadiah's acquaintance ever produced such sounds, neither were they human. What then could they be?

Obadiah parted the bushes with eager hand, and——what? Although Obadiah was by no means frightened, yet a peculiar thrill ran through him as he gazed at the creature before him. Without doubt it was human, otherwise he would have sent an investigating bullet through its body..

"It ain't no Injun, so I'll jest leave it chawin' on that thar fish an' back out o' here myself, an' git back ter camp," muttered Obadiah, suiting the action to the word.

His return to camp was the signal for a volley of questions.

"Did you see it?"

"What was it like?"

"Was it human?"

"Yes, I seen it all right ernough, an' its er sweet lookin' specermin; I don't blame ther kids fur leggin' it back ter camp, blamed ef I didn't want ter run myself! Ef I'd hed more wind I reckon as how I'd er struck er two-forty gait an' only hit ther high places," and Obadiah drew a long breath and looked about to see the effect he had produced.

"We told you it was awful," said Leon, delighted that their story should be so fully corroborated.

"Why didn't you bring it home with you?" asked Pete.

"I hain't lost no wild man; ef ye hev, why ye kin go an' git him," said Obadiah, attacking the supper before him.

"And so I will if anyone will help me," replied Pete.

This seemed to strike the fancy of the boys, who cried together:

"Let's do it!"

"Not tonight; you'll have to curb your impatience till morning," said the professor.

When morning came they scattered about the gulch in all directions, hoping that the object of their search might prove worth the trouble of finding.

"Here are your poles, boys, but your hobgoblin has removed himself to parts unknown," said Prof. Garceau, with a laugh.

Just then Pete, who was a little in advance of the rest, called out:

"Here he is! Come on!"

When, however, they reached the place where Pete had seen the strange being he had disappeared.

"Where did he go?"

"Right up the gulch."

"Keep er leetle higher up an' yell when ye see him!" shouted Obadiah, as they followed on up the ravine.

"Be careful and do not hurt the unfortunate creature," said the professor.

At the head of the gulch they found, among the crags and boulders, an opening, or as they all thought, the entrance to a cave. It was about twenty feet high, and as perfectly arched as could have been done by human hands. It was overgrown with a wealth of hanging vines and mosses, and tall pines shaded it from the sun even at noonday.

"Here's where he's gone, sure as you live!" exclaimed Leon; "let's follow him in."

"It may be an extensive cave," said Henry West.

"Then we shall want torches," suggested Percy.

"We kin git them moughty quick; some pine knots. Come, Pete, git er gait on ye an' rustle up some, erbout that thar dead pine up thar, an' I'll watch ther opening," said Obadiah to his subordinatē, who lost no time in bringing down some broken fragments of pine roots that were so saturated with pitch that they made fine torches when lighted.

"Now, let us plan this so that we may make no mistake about catching this fellow, whoever he may be," said Prof. Garceau.

"Ye're in kermant, sing out yer orders, all I wants is ter git my hands on him," responded Obadiah.

"You will doubtless have the chance, Obed, for we shall depend on you for the heavy work. If, as I believe, this fellow is crazy, he will tax all your strength. Pete, you've got a rope, I see; we'll depend on you to tie him when we get him down. Henry and I will attack from the side, always providing that he is not a reasonable being, and you boys may hold the torches to the best advantage, so that we may have plenty of light," ordered the professor, a military tone taking the place of his usually smooth and gentle accents. Evidently the professor had risen to the occasion.


"But I don't want to hold the torches, I want a hand in the fun myself," said Leon, rebelling.

"If Percy can hold a torch I think you may also be able to do it, and I am surprised that you should so express yourself about a suffer-

ing fellow-creature," replied Prof. Garceau, severely.

Obadiah had taken his hunting knife, that had a blade like a meat-axe, and fashioned quite shapely torches out of the pitch-pine knots, and in a few moments had them blazing brightly. Giving them to the boys with words of caution: "Don't ye let 'em git out, an' don't ye git in nobody's way!" he took the lead and proceeded to explore the cave.

For the first hundred yards or so the torches were hardly needed, the light from the entrance shining in and illuminating the high, arched roof, that had become encrusted with a black oxide of manganese, giving it an appearance of great beauty. Scintillating rays of light that partook of the glow of the torches, shot out from behind the shadows of supporting columns; dark, gloomy, vault-like places were lighted for the first time, and long, dancing, weird shapes were cast upon the walls as they went along. The air was chill and damp, and it seemed a most uninviting place for a habitation.



Suddenly Pete whispered:

"Listen, Leon! Stop!"

Immediately every ear was strained to catch the slightest sound.

"I don't hear anything."

"Keep your torch still; don't keep moving it that way."

Henry West stretched himself at full length along the floor of the cave and laid his ear to the stone:

"I can hear steps beyond us. He is here and going from us rapidly. The steps become faint! yet fainter! They are beyond my hearing!" said he, rising to his feet.

"Then we must hurry on; if there be no outlet we have him!"

On they went, the sides of the cave becoming narrower, and the roof lower. The air was not so pure, at least the torches seemed to burn less brightly and to make more smoke.

"We must be careful, there can be no outlet beyond, or there would be a draught of air to move the smoke," said Henry West, and then a sudden turn disclosed the fact that they had come to the end of the cave.

Solid walls on every side save whence they had come. Where then was the object of their search?

"Ther's nothin' here, an' that's certin," said Obadiah, but the rapid glance of Henry West saw what had escaped the sight of the speaker. Above them on a shelf of rock, partially obscured by the smoke, crouched a hideous object.

"Get back with your lights!" cried Henry West, but they were tardy in obeying, and the next instant a flood of water came pouring from above, putting out their torches and sending them all helter-skelter over each other, while above the sound of the falling water came an awful, blood-curdling scream!

In such Stygian darkness, in the very bowels of the earth and beset by dangers the very nature of which could not be conjectured, little wonder is it that they were panic-stricken.

Their retreat was a most disorderly one, and to the absence of light must be given credit for the shortness of it. They tumbled and fell over each other, not knowing where to avoid their enemy; they dashed against the walls



from side to side, and had not Henry West stepped upon one of the torches, which he at once relighted, the consequences might have proved fatal for some of them. As the professor afterward remarked, if he had not dashed his brains out against the walls he was sure to have died of fright in that awful cave.

The pitchy resinous torch was easily lighted and its fitful glare again illumined the scene.

"Hold on, there's no danger," came the clear, cool tones of Henry West, suddenly bringing them to their senses. As the light had flickered upon them, one and all had been possessed of the idea that the unknown had turned the tables upon them and was pursuing them, not only with water, but with fire.

"Is it you, Henry?" asked the professor, recognizing the voice of the Indian.

"Yes; hold on Pete! Where's Leon?"

"I am here, and so is Percy, but where's Obed?"

"Oh, Obed! Obed! Hello there!" they shouted. There was no response, save the echo of their own voices. Had Obed been spirited away by the horrible goblin above?

"What can have happened?" they whispered, "surely he can never have found his way out of here."

Moving slowly about, Henry West finally came upon the inanimate form of Obadiah, lying in a heap at the base of one of the columns of stalactite formation.

"Here, quick! Here's Obed and I'm afraid he's hurt," cried the Indian, and they rushed to where the unfortunate man lay.

Pete raised his head and placed him in a more comfortable position. An ugly wound on his head, from which the blood was freely flowing, told the story. In his mad haste to get away he had dashed his head against the solid stone wall and been knocked senseless.

Running to a small stream that flowed through the cave, Percy filled his hat with water, which he dashed in Obadiah's face. He groaned, and soon began struggling to rise.

"Hold on a bit, old man," said Pete, warningly, "you've bumped your head and are apt to be shaky on your pins."

But the water had proved efficacious and Obadiah was himself once more.

"Let me up! I ain't killed; where is that thar varmint?" and Obadiah struggled to his feet, a little dizzy, but not seriously hurt, as they had feared. "I recomember now, ther water come down an' then it war all dark."

"And then we all stampeded like a lot of goats," finished Pete.

"Whar did ther water come from?"

"That's what we want to know; we were all drenched," answered Leon.

"I think I saw what no one else did," said Henry quietly.

"What was that?"

"I saw the man we are after up on a narrow ledge of rock just over our heads. He stood there leaning down, and I saw him raise his hand and draw back a kind of slide—then came the deluge!"

"You haven't lost your rope, Pete?" questioned the professor.

"No, sir, I held to it like grim death; I expect I was too scared to drop it," grinned Pete.

"Well, I think we are ready now, and we'll make another trial. You boys want to keep

well in the rear, and out of the way of falling water with the torches. He may shower us again."

"All right, sir, we'll look out for that," responded Percy.

"Come then," cried the professor, and followed by the others he dashed on to the scene of their inglorious defeat.

The light from the torches brought the besieged into full view. Truly he was a frightful looking object. Long, tangled hair hung from his head to his shoulders and his matted beard reached his waist. His chest, which was of great width, and his long, sinewy arms were covered with hair like those of a wild beast. The skin of some animal hung from about his loins, and his hands and feet were furnished with nails like immense claws. His eyes were small and in the shadow of his great shock of hair glowed like two coals of fire. He made no sign save that he kept up a constant grinding of his teeth.

"What a horrible brute! I wish we had not undertaken this."

"What?" asked Obadiah sharply.

"I—I hardly know about troubling this creature. You see I don't know what we're to do with him. I'm sure he's quite out of his mind," answered the professor, suddenly realizing the many annoyances all this would entail.

"Ho! Ef ye don't want him, I kin take him. I kin sell him ter ther circus an' make er grub-stake outer him," said the descendant of the illustrious Boone.

"How are we to get him down from there?" asked the professor, succumbing to the inevitable.

"Git him down? How air ye with ther rope, Pete?"

"Pretty fair; I used to heel 'em every time."

"All right, yank him down!" commanded Obadiah.

Taking the noose lightly in his right hand, with the balance of the rope coiled carefully in his left, Pete gave it a few preliminary whirls about his head as he asked:

"How do you want him?"

"Jest drap it over his neck!"

The rope flew through the air, the wild man glaring with infernal fury at it and grinding his teeth with anger; and then it fell fairly about the creature's neck, causing him to give utterance to another of his inhuman shrieks.


"Jerk him down, quick, this is horrible!" cried the professor.

With cat-like agility the wild man caught the rope in his claw-like hands and tossed it lightly over his head.

"Ha! ha! you've been roped before!" cried Pete. "You're a dandy. Here goes again!" and he quickly coiled and launched the rope again, skillfully landing it around his head and under one arm.

"Pull! pull!"

They all tugged at the rope, while the boys held the flickering torches; their prisoner made a heroic resistance, but to no purpose. Inch by inch he was brought within their reach, when Obadiah, like the giant in the story books, threw himself upon the hairy monster, as if with his weight alone he would bear him to the ground; but he reckoned without his host. The wild man, possessed with muscles like steel



springs, although he had fallen upon his back, yet managed to draw up one foot. The next instant Obadiah was sent sprawling across the cave.

Henry West and Pete closed in upon him and succeeded in getting his hands behind his back. Obadiah, returning, piled on top of the struggling mass of humanity, regardless of what he was doing so long as he got hold of something. The professor skipped valorously about, troubled and anxious, looking for some weak spot in the tumbling, twisting, striking, and kicking mass of arms and legs.

"Quick now! Oh, he's loose agin!"

"I almost had them fast—he's too much for us; you must get him over more!" cried Henry West.

"I've got him! git yer rope!" grunted Obadiah.

"Hang to his hands! Now I've got 'em, all right!" and with a few turns he had the horrid claws firmly fastened. Then for the legs. Leon held the torches yet closer; too close it proved, for it brought him within reach of those powerful legs, and he was quickly sent sprawling in one direction and his torch in another.

There had been but little light before, now it was almost perfect darkness, Percy's torch was going out.

"Get the torches!" screamed Pete.

"Find them lights!" yelled Obadiah.

"Hang on to him!" cried Henry West.

"I can't find any," said Leon, groping about the floor.

"I've got one!" cried Percy, and in a moment a lurid blaze was again lighting the cave.

"Hev ye got 'im tight?" demanded Obadiah, as the struggles of the vanquished became feebler.

"Yes, I've got half hitches enough on him to hold him till doomsday," replied Pete.

"Let 'im up!" puffed Obadiah, out of breath.

Just what he meant Obadiah did not explain, as when he attempted to rise with the others he found himself utterly unable to do so. One of his legs had been firmly bound up with one of the wild man's!

"Hold him! I'm fast here! I'm fast!" shrieked Obadiah, and the hairy monster, as if realizing the state of affairs, kicked with renewed vigor.

"Oh! oh! stop him! stop him!" Obed cried, as he was literally threshed about the floor.



## CHAPTER XIII.

"Here thar! help me, some on ye! Consarn ther blamed critter! hold his feet, durn 'im! Jump on 'im Pete!" yelled Obadiah furiously.

"Ha! ha! ha! Well I never! That's one on you, Obed!" cried Pete, laughing uproariously.

"That's right; stan' thar an' laugh, will ye? I'm gettin' killed. Jest hurry up, or I'll stick my knife inter this critter an' stop his durn foolishness!" roared Obadiah, getting angry.

"Help him at once, boys!" commanded Prof. Garceau; and after much scuffling Obadiah was released and the wild man properly fastened.

"Before we leave here let us examine his retreat. We may find something to establish his identity," said the professor.

"Here are some niches in the rock. They must have been his ladder. Come, Percy, let us go up and prospect," said Leon.

They easily climbed upon the ledge, but only saw a little dead grass that had been used by the creature as a bed.

"Look out! Ye're es likely es not ter find rattlers or polecats in sich er critter's den," growled Obadiah.

"There's nothing that I can see, except a few bones. Yes, here's a little buckskin bag; hold the torch higher, Percy. It's like those you have, father, and there's something in it."

"Come down!" called the professor, excitedly, "we can examine it better down here."

The boys clambered down and held out the little bag.

"Yes," said Henry West, "it's like the others."

"There's the same mark, the Maltese cross!" cried Leon, pointing to the dingy bit of stitching.

"Open it!" suggested Percy.

"Let's git out o' this infernal hole fust, I kin hardly breathe," interrupted Obadiah, coughing.

"Yes, let's go outside," and Pete and Obadiah picked up the tightly bound prisoner and carried him with little ceremony to the open air, followed by the whole party.

"Whew! but it seems good to see sunlight again," said Leon, blinking his eyes like a young owl.

"Yes, indeed, my boy; and now let us examine the bag without further waiting," said Prof. Garceau.

"Does it seem right to you to meddle with the property of this poor creature? He must also be the owner of the other bags," said the young Indian, looking sympathetically at the prostrate figure lying bound at his feet.

"Even so, my dear Henry, it will do no harm to satisfy ourselves of its contents," answered the professor, untying the string about the bag. "Yes, yes, it is as I thought; here are more sapphires!"

He poured some of the shining uncut gems out into his hand and held it out to Henry West. At this the wild man became violently excited and made strenuous efforts to rise, giving forth fierce unnatural screams.

"The poor fellow recognizes his property; there is then some mind left," said the Indian.

"I wonder if he would recognize the other bags."

"We can try him when we get back to camp."

"How are we to get him there?"

"Pete an' I kin carry 'im; I could carry 'im erlone, he ain't heavy," said Obadiah.

"Then let's be going," said Pete, and resuming their burden they proceeded on their return trip, the others following on behind.

In a short time they were back in camp with their prisoner. Some one suggested that they give him a name. Several were mentioned, meeting with little favor, when Leon said:

"Oh, call him Mr. Johnston; it is a good name."

"Yes, that thar's er good ernough name; let 'im be Mr. Johnsing!"

"Hurrah for Mr. Johnsing!" shouted Percy, and they all laughed.

"Your ward is turned over to your care, Henry," announced the professor.

"Obed, take off your hat to Mr. Johnsing." laughed Leon.

"I don't take off my hat to no man; it's er free an' independent country, an' I'm er 'Merican citizen, an' my hat don't come off ter ther King

o' England, nor ther Queen o' France, neither," retorted Obadiah, disdainfully.

"Whoop! Good for the American citizen!" cried Leon, waving his hat.

"And now let us get our traps on board and be starting down stream. No more nonsense Leon!" said his father.

The journey down the river was but a repetition of that of the previous day, but without mishap. The camp was pitched after a successful landing, and the subject of their prisoner discussed. Up to this time he had shown himself most unreasonable, resenting every kindness, even by snarls of rage, and biting at them when they ventured near him.

"I think we can manage him," said the Indian.

"Then you think there is method in his madness?"

"I shall try him by means of the bags of sapphires."

"True, we have not yet seen if he will recognize these of ours."

Henry West now brought out the three bags of sapphires, and approached the wild man.

"Now, Mr. Johnson——"

"No, no! he was christened Johnsing!" cried Leon.

"Yes, Johnsing is his name," attested Percy, laughing.

"Well then, Mr. Johnsing, I have some property of yours; here, see the bag?"

"Ha! he recognizes it," exclaimed the professor, as Mr. Johnsing turned himself half over, and stared eagerly at the bag held out to his inspection.

"Yes, you remember. That is good. It is yours, as I dare say are the others, and if you are quiet and good, I'll return this to you."

"But it may not belong to him, Henry, do not give it to him yet!" urged the professor.

"Surely you do not doubt that this at least is his property?"

"He may have found it."

"It is possible. Now, Mr. Johnsing, if you mind me, very well, if you don't, over they go into the water," and Henry West held them out over the edge of the raft. The infuriated monster howled with agony.

"I believe you have the key to his management," acknowledged Prof. Garceau.

"Show him the other bags," said Leon, who had now come on board the raft.

"Yes, that will test his memory."

Henry West partially untied his refractory ward, allowing him to sit up. As he drew forth the other two bags a light broke over the horrible face of the wild man, that was almost pitiful to see, and he strained to free himself from his bonds. When he realized the utter helplessness of his position his rage was frightful.

The Indian immediately walked to the edge of the raft and held out the bags. The wild man became quiet, still following with his little red eyes every movement of Henry West. The latter now placed one of the bags by his side, and left him more quiet than he had been since his capture.

It was dark when Obadiah came in with the horses, and his first question was of Mr. Johnsing.

"He's doing well; we charmed him with sap-

phires; all we have to do is rattle the bag to make him dance," said Leon.

"Dance! I'd admire ter see ye make 'im dance! I'm so durn lame whar he kicked me that I kin hardly ride," growled Obadiah, as the boys took his saddle horse, that he might get his supper without delay.

After supper the boys went with Obadiah to see if they might not make their prisoner more comfortable for the night.

"Wal', my beauty," said the guide, leaning over to view the brute-like features of Mr. Johnsing, "ye don't look es ef ye hed ernother kick in ye, not ergin mornin', ennyhow."

It was late, and in the twilight old Obadiah, with his grey whiskers and generally shaggy appearance, reminded one of a great grizzly bear. Henry West stood with his striped blanket thrown carelessly back over his bronzed shoulders, with one hand resting on a wagon wheel, his fine features lit up by pity for the unfortunate wild man on whom he gazed. The boys were just placing near him a large can of fresh water.



"The poor fellow is still looking for the other bags," said the Indian, as he met the pleading eyes.

"Poor feller!" sneered Obadiah.

"It is not a very pleasant place in which to spend the night."

"We might give him a blanket," suggested Leon.

"An' hev 'im tear it ter rags ergin mornin'."

"Happily, he's used to roughing it, but who knows that he may not have been reared in luxury. But see! What a fearful scar across the top of his head!" exclaimed Henry West, as the wild man tossing back his rough hair, disclosed a long, jagged scar running back from his forehead.

"I think if we leave the three bags of sapphires here on this board where he can see them he will remain quiet and perhaps sleep during the night. What say you, professor?"

"I hardly know. It is a risk. They are of great value, yet they seem to be the only thing to keep him quiet," answer Prof. Garceau.

"He'll knock 'em off inter ther river ergin mornin'," said Obadiah.

"No danger of that; he thinks too much of them," said Henry West, as he placed the three bags on the board, a little beyond the reach of the wild man.

Thus they left for the night the strange creature that they had deprived of liberty and dragged from his rude home, without any right save that of pity and the desire to put him in some place where he might be properly cared for.

"That cruel scar, Henry, what do you think of that? May it not be the cause of his mental condition?"

"I think," said Henry West, "that he is the man that the Nez Percés braves burned out and shot, and that he miraculously escaped death. I think that he is the owner of the three bags of sapphires!" The young Indian spoke quietly and impressively, as he walked by the professor, with his eyes looking straight ahead.

When morning came, and the boys ran to the raft to see how the prisoner had passed the night, they found only a pile of tangled and knotted ropes; the wild man was gone! and he

had taken with him the three little buckskin bags!!

The escape of Mr. Johnsing and the loss of the sapphires engendered in their minds a distrust of Henry West that nothing could do away. As Obadiah said:

"Its' moughty queer, after I hed tied 'im as tight es I did, thet he could er got loose without no help."

The following day they had hardly effected a landing when Obadiah came hurrying in with the horses.

"I hev moughty important news fur ther ol man, whar is he?"

"About the Indians?" asked Leon.

"How'd ye know?" asked the guide in answer.

"Henry West told us; do you think there's danger?"

"Whar is he?" cried Obadiah, looking about for his rival.

"He went out in the hills scouting to see what he could find out."

"I don't take no stock in thet redskin no more'n ther rest on 'em; they're all erlike. Thar

is fires burnin' on many mounting tops, an' they're callin' er big pow-wow, er some other deviltry."

"And who knows but this Henry West is leading us into a trap?" exclaimed Pete.

"It wouldn't s'prise me er bit ef that thar Injun was at ther head o' ther uprisin'," said Obadiah, shaking his head.

"No, nor me," said Pete, starting back towards the cook tent.

"An Injun's an Injun; nothin' s'prises me; I wouldn't be s'prised ef old Johnsing hisself come back at ther head o' er hull loonertick ersylum o' crazies," and with this astounding statement Obadiah Boone hurried into the cook tent for his supper.

As he entered the professor was just saying:

"I wish Henry would return; I trust he has not been so unfortunate as to fall in with any hostiles."

"No danger o' him!" muttered Obadiah.

"Do you think they will dare to attack us?"

"Ho! no! no! Dare? That's er good un! Dare ter attack ye? Why, man erlive, I seen

ther tracks o' two hundred moccasins in one trail, an' nary squaw nor pappoose ermong 'em!"

"What's that you say?"

"Jest what I mean; er passel o' young bucks."

"Then we're in danger?"

"In course we're in danger, an' we've got ter git up an' git."

"But Henry West; we can't leave him."

"Consarn Henry West! 'an' ther day we picked 'im up, too! Ye won't see him ergin, ther Injun! He's ther meanest kind, er spy an' er decoy!" thundered Obadiah, loud in his wrath.

"I can not believe it of him, Obed; you are mistaken," said the professor gravely, in defense of the absent.

"No, I ain't mistaken. I tell ye he won't come back no more less he's at ther head o' them Injuns."

While they had been talking it had grown dark, but they had not noticed the approach of night, even the light step of Henry West had not attracted their attention, so interested were they.

Suddenly he stood before them, and Leon, the first to see him, cried:

"Hello, you're back safe!"

"My dear Henry, I was never more glad to see you."

The young Indian's eyes glowed with feeling. Obadiah began to wonder how much of the conversation he had heard.

"You thought they had caught me, Obed?"

"No, I warn't consarned erbout ye," answered the old man gruffly.

"What did you learn, Henry?" asked Prof. Garceau.

"The outlook is bad, very bad; we must get away from here. I see you have the horses tied up in the trees, that is well. We must get down the river!"

"Let us start at once!" cried the professor.

"Do not hurry. We must make no move till the darkness will aid us. I saw some braves. They have stolen horses from Fort Washakie, cavalry horses among them. They are bad Indians. I overheard them planning to attack this camp."

"Attack this camp! They mean to kill us?"

"If they can."

"Do you think they are watching us?" asked the professor in a half whisper.

"They have men on the river above and below. When they see that nothing is being done they will think we do not know, and will go back to their camp and wait for the first streak of dawn. That is their time for a surprise."

"Oh, what wretches!"

"They are what the white man has made them," said Henry West, sadly.

"Thar's jest one more improvement ther white man kin put inter 'm, an' I hope ter supply er few on 'em with it ergin they gits my scalp," said Obadiah.

"And that is?" inquired Henry West, calmly looking him straight in the eyes.

"An ounce er cold lead," was the terse answer.

"We've got to give the fellows a lesson," interrupted Leon, not in the least realizing the peril of their position.

"Heaven help us!" ejaculated the professor.

"We'd better git ther camp pulled up an' the truck piled on ther raft, it's gittin' nigh midnight," said Obadiah, getting up and beginning to throw some things into a box nearby.

"Leon, you and Percy go to the edge of the timber and see if you note anything suspicious. Be careful!"

"It's too dark to see anything," said Pete.

"Never mind, you can look towards the mountains, and see if you notice any lights."

"All right, father."

"And keep close together. Don't go beyond the trees."

"An' when ye come back, give three low whistles. I don't like nobody er comin' sneakin' in on me like er cat in times like these 'ere," cautioned Obadiah.

They all went quickly to work, and pulled down the tents, rolled them into bales, tied the poles into bundles, packed everything into various boxes, and made ready to leave.

The boys had returned, reporting nothing suspicious in sight, and were busy helping stow things away.



"Hurry, Leon, my boy," whispered his father. "It is darker now than it will be in an hour, and by that time we must be well on our way down the river."

"It seems too bad to let Obed go alone with the horses, he might run right into a band of Indians," replied Leon, as he carefully put the cooking utensils into the mess box, without rattling the pans together.

"Don't ye fear fur me, young feller, I kin take keer o' myself; ther wust that mough happen ud be ef I left yer hosses loose in ther stampede, but old Obed'll wiggle through like er drop o' quick in er rusty gold pan."

"We're lucky to have the raft to escape on since those Indians are bent on mischief," said Percy.

"We have much to be thankful for. Come, let each take all he can carry and go quietly together to the raft," and with arms full the professor started for the river. The rest followed, with as little noise as possible.

Arriving at the river bank, they carefully dropped their burdens and looked for the raft. It was gone!

## CHAPTER XIV.

The drowning man clutching at the proverbial straw has often been written about, in the most harrowing strains, and the most beautiful language; but tear away the straw and where shall we find the onomatopoeia to express the anguish of soul when that grasping hand catches only the empty air and sinks beneath the relentless waters?

"The raft is gone!" groaned the professor, a feeling of deadly fear for the moment sweeping over him.

"Yes, it's gone, sure enough," echoed Pete.

"Well, I'm surprised at this!" exclaimed Henry West.

"Ye air? I'm s'prised at nothin'. Henry West, or whoever ye be, ye put er hole through my hat one day, an' I'm er goin' ter put one through yer head now!" said Obadiab, deliberately drawing his revolver, and presenting it as he spoke.

"Stop, Obed! What would you do?"

"Punish ther snake in ther grass ergin he does us worse mischief."

"He has nothing to do with this; you misjudge him. Put up your weapon!" commanded Professor Garceau.

"Ther double dealin' scoundrel! He shan't never live ter gloat over his work! I've suspicioned 'im all along!"

"Stop, Obed! Stop! I command you!" said the professor sternly.

"If he thinks there's a drop of false blood in my veins, let him shoot! and he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he never killed a man that feared death less!" said Henry West, throwing back his head, folding his arms and looking squarely down the barrel of Obadiah's revolver.

"Enough of this! Your enmity will be the undoing of us all. Put away your revolver, Obed, it may be needed for a better purpose before we get out of this."

The fears and trepidation of the professor entirely disappeared as the danger increased—a timid man before necessity called for action, a hero during it.

"Wal', ef ye insist, purfess', I'll put her back; this is ther second time. I knows as how I'm er doin' wrong, an' ther next time I'll not ask no man's leave," and Obadiah replaced his revolver in his belt.

"I suppose we had best carry these things back."

"Yes, but what shall we do then?" asked Leon.

"What do you advise, Obed?" inquired Prof. Garceau.

"Ther only thing's ter git erway from here."

"What do you say, Henry?"

"My advice should not be asked; my loyalty has been questioned."

"Never by me; I have never doubted you, Henry."

"Thank you. We are in a bad plight, and the Indians mean the worst that can be imagined. Obed's advice is good, let us follow it. I bear him no ill will. Who can help suspecting an Indian who is willing to take sides against his race? I stand by you only because I believe you to be in the right. My people have no right to molest you."

"Then we must leave this timber?"

"Yes; I noticed one high hill well away from all coulees; we must pack all our traps on the horses, and go there as quietly and as quickly as possible."

"How fortunate that we took the pack saddles from the raft."

"Did you? That's well, although we could have managed without them. As soon as we reach the hill, we must prepare for a defense."

The ill-feeling between Obadiah and Heni was put aside in the hurried packing of the horses, and when all was done they stole away silently in the darkness, headed by Obadiah. Reaching the top of the hill, the animals were hobbled, thrown down and quickly tied, to be used as breastworks should the Indians attack them.

The night was very dark, with few stars showing; but the darkness was friendly, and ere long their preparations were made, and they lay about on the ground, discussing the situation.

"What if they set fire to this long grass and

burn us out?" asked Leon of Henry West, who happened to be nearest him.

"We must do the burning," was the cool answer.

"Not burn ourselves out?"

"We must start fires all about us, each touching a match at the same time, and then putting out the fire on the side towards the horses, letting it burn from us. It can be done without danger to our property and will serve to keep our enemies at bay for awhile."

"That's a good idea, but isn't it time it was getting light in the east?"

Leon lay behind his saddle mare trying to comfort her by talking to and rubbing her. The animal did not understand it all, and kept raising her head and banging it down upon the ground.

Finally old Obadiah spoke:

"It's gettin' light, now watch fur 'em!" He lay on the other side, behind a big sorrel that worked on the heavy wagon.

"Yes, it's growing lighter, but I don't see anything yet but the grove of cottonwoods where we camped," said Percy.

"I kin; I kin see ther heads er bobbin' up out o' ther tall grass, like er lot o' young turkeys when er dorg barks."

"Yes; see! See them now. They're getting up on their feet! They think we're all asleep!" exclaimed Leon.

"So they do, the murderous wretches!" cried Prof. Garceau.

In the hush of the morning they looked down; down upon the scores of bloodthirsty Indians, stealing silently in upon their late camp, thinking to surprise and kill them all as they lay asleep. It was with a curious mixture of feelings that they watched them, when after a few moments they emerged from the grove, coming from all parts of it, with the most blood-curdling yells, brandishing their knives in the air! Baulked of their prey, it did not take long for their hawk-like eyes to discover the retreat on the hill.

"Ha! you did not catch us napping that time, you cut-throats!" cried Leon.

"They have found us now! See them come!" exclaimed Percy, as the Indians left the grove and disappeared in a small coulee.

"Quick now, with your matches! We must fight them in their own way," said Henry West, as he gave instructions under which fires were started in the long grass all about them. The grass caught like tinder and was with difficulty extinguished on the inner circle. The smoke was dense, and the heat great. The move was a bold one and carried a defiance with it, that staggered the howling mob beyond.

As the smoke rolled up in dense black columns the horses became terror-stricken, and frantically strove to regain their feet, beating their heads on the ground and uttering loud snorts of fear. This, with the crackling flames on every side, served to increase the intensity of the situation.

When the fire in its devouring fury had gotten a little beyond them they could see their discomfited assailants seeking safety in the river.

"The fire is burning above and below us, and if they have left their horses in the mountains below they will never get them again, as the timber down there is on fire now," said Henry West.



"This will clean the country out of the balance of the scoundrels, and I guess we're good for this crowd," exclaimed Leon, getting excited.

"They will give us a fight. I'm glad we have plenty of ammunition and long-range guns."

"Look!" cried Pete; "they're dividing up; they're going to surround us!" throwing open as he spoke the large ammunition box, so that all might find cartridges when their magazines were exhausted.

"They was sure ter do thet. Now, boys, watch 'em an' don't let none on 'em git inter hidin' 'thout our knowin' on't," warned Obadiah.

"I'll keep an eye on them," answered Leon.

"There are six of them coming directly towards us," exclaimed Percy.

"Yes, I see. Shall we let them come nearer, Obed? You must direct us now; you know most about these things," said the professor. Obadiah, who had been a little sullen since his passage at arms with the Indian, replied doggedly:

"Thar ain't nothin' ter do; it's each man fur *hisself*, an 'do yer best shootin'!"

"That we must do of course; I'm not much of a marksman, but if it comes to close quarters, I shall not disgrace the party."

"Those fellows are getting much closer; I don't think there'd be any harm in keeping down a bit. It's better to be cautious," said Leon.

"That's the mark of a good general; but what has the fellow got?"

"What is he doing now?" asked Percy as one of the six, now within five hundred yards of them, began waving a dirty rag over his head.

"Ho! ho! a flag of truce!"

The overture was received with shouts of derision by the little party lying back of their prostrate horses. Anything so pacific as a flag of truce might have been supposed to bring with it a kindly welcome; but the sign of conciliation from the unworthy foe seemed more detestable than his underhanded thrusts.

"Ha! ha! You didn't carry that rag when you were crawling up on our old camp!" said Leon.

"No, the cowardly brute! He found us a lit-

tle too clever for him, and now he wants to try some other game," commented Percy, as the Indian began walking around in a circle.

"What's that for, Obed?"

"He's er signallin' thet he wants ter hev er talk with us, wants ter offer ter let us live ef we'll give up our hosses an' guns, er somethin' like that."

"We might have a talk with them then, and give them something, and perhaps they will let us alone," suggested the professor.

"Hurray fur ther purfess'! Ye're onter er thing er two yerself! I tumble."

"You think it a good idea?"

"Way up! Let 'em come up ter erbout two hunderd yards. I'm good fur my man every pop at thet thar range."

"What do you mean?" cried the professor, indignantly. "You would not fire upon a flag of truce, the emblem of peace among all nations, would you?"

But Obadiah, mistaking the import of the professor's words, sniffed:

"O' course not; ye think I'd hit ther flag? I'd

take my own head fur er football ef I'd miss my man at two hunderd yards!"

"No, no, you must not shoot him at all!"

"An' why not? Which one do yer want me ter knock over?"

"We must respect that flag! Dcn't you know what a flag of truce is, Obed?"

"Not in no Injun's hands. Why, bless ye, man! Yer not goin' ter let 'em fool ye with thet thar rag, be ye?" and Obadiah opened his eyes in astonishment.

"We must find out what he wants."

"Did yer say as how ye wanted me ter advise ye in this little love-feast?"

"Yes, Obed."

"Then my advice is ter let them cusses git up es close es they wants ter, an' then turn loose on 'em."

"I can never do that. They must fire the first shot, otherwise we will not be justified in injuring them."

"They'll do thet soon enough," mumbled Obadiah, who had been used to fighting Indians in their own methods of warfare.

The savages now came closer, and occasionally the holder of the flag would walk around in a small circle as before. Finally they got within about three hundred yards.

"What's become of the others?"

"What did I tell ye, boys? Why warn't ye watchin' em? I told ye ter watch whar they went. Why didn't ye do it?" cried Obadiah.

"Why, you see when those——" Leon's reply was cut short by a shower of bullets that sang unpleasantly close to their heads.

"Down! Down! Get behind the horses," shouted the professor.

Puffs of smoke from every side left the whereabouts of the Indians no longer a matter for conjecture. They had taken advantage of the attention given to the flag of truce, and had crawled up through the clumps of half-burnt grass until within long range, when at a given signal they had sent a volley at the besieged, which was followed by a scattering discharge from the Indians with the flag of truce.

The distance having been overestimated by the men on lower ground, the bullets had gone

harmlessly overhead; but the attack was so sudden that none of those behind the horses, save Pete, were ready to return the fire. He pulled the trigger! and his solitary weapon did more damage than the entire fusillade of the enemy. Pete's bullet flew on its deadly errand, and the flag-bearer sprang into the air, ran a few yards and tumbled over! The Indians scattered in all directions.

"Good fur ye, Pete!" exclaimed Obadiah, not slow to follow his example. Bang! and another fell.

Bang! bang! bang! from the others sent them dodging and running for shelter.

"I hit one!" shouted Leon; "I know I did! I could see the others trying to help him away!"

"They don't feel so smart now!" said Percy.

"I'm afraid this will make them more ugly than ever," remarked the professor.

"Didn't they dodge, though, like so many jack-rabbits?"

"Not so well but that some of them got hit," said Leon.

"The question is," said the professor, "what are we going to do for water?"

"That's a fact; we hadn't thought of that."

"Wall, I couldn't think o' that an' everythin' else," growled Obadiah, as if he had been personally accused.

"Oh, they'll never dare to come so near again, now they find we're ready for them," rejoined Leon, a little contemptuously.

"I fear that some of them have gone back up the river for more of their tribe," said Henry West.

"You're right. There comes a whole mob of them," cried Percy, pointing up the stream.

"Oh, and what a lot of them coming down the gulch!"

"Mercy on us! What shall we do if they all attack us at once?" asked the professor, wildly.

"All ther better chance fur us ter git in our work. I'm gittin' tired o' bein' shet in here like er rat in er corner."

Their thirst was now becoming distressing, the knowledge that there was no water to be had only making it the more intense. The boys in their excitement had eaten nothing all day and now began to be reminded of the fact.

"Thar's nothin' better ter lean on in er scrap like this 'ere than er full stummick," remarked Obadiah, cramming another biscuit from the open mess chest into his capacious mouth, and the boys finally left their posts and took a hearty lunch likewise.

The remainder of the day passed without further aggressions on the part of the enemy, save for an occasional bullet whistling overhead.

The besieged had placed themselves about in a circle and watched for any signs of renewed activity among the Indians. A second horse had been badly wounded and Pete had been forced to end its sufferings by a bullet from his own rifle.

An occasional groan was the only sign of life among the other horses, their struggles having ceased; their condition was truly pitiable. Henry West and the professor had moved to one side of the enclosure away from the others.

"What do you think of it, Henry?"

"Had we done a little poorer shooting they might have swallowed their chagrin and moved



away in the night, but death calls for vengeance. Hear their war songs now down by the river? They are making medicine now. See those fires? They are holding a council."

The fitful breeze now and then brought to their ears a doleful chanting, interspersed by the most awful yells and long-drawn howls from the dusky warriors.

"You think they are sure to attack us in the morning?"

"There is no doubt of it. They are infuriated and are working themselves up to a fever that knows no cooling save in blood!"

"We will do our best if the worst must come. We can but die like brave men, but it seems dreadful that our lives should be thrown away in this manner."

The professor spoke as he felt, gloomily, and Henry West made no reply. His eyes looked out across the mountains to the fast darkening sky, calm and inscrutable. Of what was he thinking?

The long night was unbroken, except for the yells of execration down by the river, and the

frequent cries of "Coo-ee-ah!" from all about them.

They talked in whispers, with no thought of sleep, commenting sadly on the unfortunate end of their expedition, and promising each other that they should not be taken alive.

At last the night began to fade, small objects about them beginning to assume form; the day was breaking!

"Look out, now!" whispered Obadiah. "Git ready; the varmints is all around us!"

Hardly was the warning given when from the ground on all sides of them rose tall warriors with blood-curdling cries ringing from their lips as they blindly charged upon them!

The irregular discharge of their rifles was answered by our party behind the horses, who, being under shelter, had the advantage, doing destructive work. And now Henry West showed his marvelous skill with his heavy Winchester rifle. He lay on his side and discharged every cartridge in the magazine without taking his rifle from his shoulder. The reports from it rang out with such wonderful rapidity, that it

did the work of half a dozen ordinary rifles; and his aim was so unerring that each bullet struck an Indian in exactly the same spot, causing instant death! Nor were the others far behind their rifles sending death and destruction through the horde of half-naked, painted savages.

The snorts and screams of the frightened horses, the shouts of the men mingled with the constant discharge of rifles, the shrieks of the dying savages as they tumbled right and left made a noise that was deafening, and the air grew thick with the sulphurous smoke, so that they were half stifled.

On they came like demons, and the distance between them was half covered! Their shots had as yet done no damage except to the horses, but now a bullet plowed its way across Obadiah's cheek, the blood from which flowed down in a ghastly stream over his face, giving him a ferocious appearance.

Bang! bang! bang! rang out the heavy Winchester, and the circle in front of Henry West was cleared.

The rapid and fatal fire was more than they could stand. They faltered and fell back! Some of their leaders shouted words of encouragement to them, and they dashed on. The faint-hearted ones beat a retreat, but there were many to fill their places, and again they closed in! And now they could keep them off no longer—they were climbing in upon them and they had no time to reload! The little party, seemingly doomed to certain death, clubbed their rifles and determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

Blow after blow was struck and parried, even the old professor filled with a giant's strength and doing a giant's work; but how must it end? Oh, for a moment to reload!

Obadiah fought like a demon. His hat had been blown away, his shirt was torn open and with blood streaming down his face and matting in his whiskers he looked like one! A crushing blow on Pete's head had sent him reeling backwards as Henry West sprang into his place. And now the exultant yells of the savages, as they felt their prey within their grasp, sounded

in the ears of the besieged. Obadiah struck a ponderous red man to the earth, but himself slipped and fell at full length between two of the infuriated devils.

A groan—a prayer from the lips of the professor as he sees the beginning of the end, and his thoughts go from his own fate to that of his beloved son. But there are worse deaths than this! They must never be taken alive!

As Obadiah fell, the long, bright, gleaming knife of one of the savages was raised and would have come down to bury its hungry point in his breast had not Henry West dashed upon him and grasped at once the uplifted hand and the throat of the murderer. The second's pause gave Obadiah time to seize the legs of the other, and as he rose he tossed his man far from him, landing him with a dull thud. 'Twas quickly done, but not soon enough to save Henry West, who was wrestling with the greatest warrior of the tribe. With fair play he would have overthrown him, but when was fair play ever given by an Indian?

Another of the treacherous brutes made an



Henry West was wrestling with the greatest warrior  
of the tribe



underhand thrust and buried his knife in the heart of the noblest Indian that ever lived! A gasp—a groan,—and Henry West fell backwards over Leon's pet mare that had been killed in the beginning of the fight.

Although this stroke had been as a flash of lightning, yet in that brief space the professor recognized the evil countenance of Two Moons—the fate implied by the broken arrow had reached its victim.



## CHAPTER XV.

## Conclusion.

All men have in their natures enough of the animal, that once having tasted blood they become possessed with a desire to slay, and Leon was now at that stage when the tearing of himself limb from limb would have been as nothing could he but first avenge the death of the one whose life had just been given for that of a man that had worse than ill-treated him. There was a look of malignant hate upon the painted features of the savage as he drew his reeking knife from the breast of Henry West, but it was his last! The next instant Leon brought his clubbed rifle down upon his crested skull.

"Good fur ye!" shouted Obadiah, felling another to the earth.

Suddenly there were shouts and cries from the Indians that had fallen back; many turned and began running towards the river.

"Hark! What's that?" The ears of the savage are keen. "What is that faint note?" And

now they hear it more distinctly; now when their victims are almost within their grasp they hear it and stumble and fall back over the piles of the slain. The ground is slippery with their own blood. Obadiah's right arm is hanging helpless at his side, but his great bow-knife cuts half way through another savage with his left. Percy closes in between him and the professor, who, with a handkerchief wound about his head, is faint and bleeding from more than one wound.

Again that sound! And nearer! The panting men and boys behind the breastwork of dead and dying men and horses hear it! Hurrah! 'Tis the glorious bugle call! Now loud the trumpeting blast sounds over the plain, and echoes from hill and mountain side! "Hurrah! Hurrah!" shout Leon and Percy.

Dearly as an Indian loves revenge and bloodshed, yet better he loves his own life! The stolen horses have been tracked! The cavalry have followed them, and now the Indians, being on foot, know that they have not a moment to lose. The mountain fastnesses are cut off

from them, by the still raging fire, in all directions save where sounds the bugle call!

Their only chance lies in the river; they break and run towards it. Again those clear notes fall on their ears, as the long line of blue-coated horsemen come dashing down from the mountain trail.

They take in at a glance the meaning of the scene before them, and spur on their jaded horses after the flying Indians, hoping to cut them off from the river.

"Give it to the cowardly wretches!" shouted Percy.

"Hurrah for Uncle Sam! Don't spare them!" cried Leon.

"Hush, boys, you should feel thankful enough for our timely rescue, to have mercy on our enemies," said the professor, who looked pale and exhausted. "Leon, my son, are you badly hurt?"

"Only a scratch, father; but, oh, how I want a drink of water!"

"Water! water!" moans Pete faintly, from where he lies with his head bolstered up on one of the dead horses.

"Pete is alive! I thought they had killed him. He calls for water!" and the professor bent tenderly over him and felt his pulse.

"I am unhurt. I will run to the river and bring some," said Percy, taking a pail and starting down the hill as he spoke.

Obadiah Boone raised himself from where he had been bending over the lifeless body of his late rival. His eyes looked blurred under his shaggy brows, as he said huskily:

"Ther red devils has done fur West! He war one Injun as warn't no Injun at all, an' I want ter say here an' now, as how I'm sorry fur ther way I acted ergin 'im; an' 'cause he saved my life by giving his own, I swear as how I'll never kill ernother o' the varmints—not unless he draws er bead on me fust!"

It was a bloody scene to look upon—dead horses, and Indians with their ghastly features stained with blood and powder smoke, lying piled together as they had fallen, and amidst it all, looking up to Heaven, with the same calm, inscrutable look he wore in life, lay Henry West, his soul gone to its last accounting.

A race in which life depends upon the goal being reached will of a surety be a swift one, and the Indians reached the river, plunged in and swam across, losing themselves in the dense undergrowth on the other side before the cavalry drew rein at the water's edge. It was thought useless to follow them farther.

The timely arrival of that company of cavalry was as unexpected as fortunate in that out-of-the-way corner of the world. Never before in the history of Indian warfare had a more desperate charge been made, nor a more stubborn resistance maintained against such fearful odds; at least so the captain of the company of cavalry stated in his official report.

Obadiah had received several flesh wounds, the one through his right arm being the only one that was likely to give him trouble.

The blow on Pete's head fortunately proved only a severe contusion, and not a fracture of the skull, while the injuries to the professor and his son proved but slight.

Since the raging timber fires gave promise of burning for some time, the cavalry, after a few

days' rest, turned back, leaving ten men and a sergeant with the professor. They were instructed to act as escort for his party during their stay in that part of the country.

Being, as well as they could calculate, near the place of the sapphire deposit, when they had sufficiently recovered from the effects of their wounds they set about a systematic search for the spot.

In all nature of things, this must have been of an interminable length, had it not been for the scientific knowledge of the professor, who easily recognized from the character of the ground where to search and what to avoid.

Thus guided, he came upon traces of former digging and rude excavations of recent date. A few pans of dirt showed corundum in small particles, but immense quantities, and a shaft was sunk to bedrock, where he was rewarded by finding several fine stones in the first pan.

"Hurrah! we've found them!" cried Leon.

"Good for you!" yelled Percy, dancing about in glee.

"Yes, boys, we've found the sapphire deposit!

And now we must stake out our claims," said Prof. Garceau, carefully putting the sapphires in his pocket.

"Let us pan out some more dirt!"

"Very well, you may try your luck."

Each of the boys tried washing a pan of gravel, Leon finding several small stones, while Percy washed out a magnificent one, its limpid depths showing no flaw.

Highly elated, they joined the professor, who had brought his tape line, and now proceeded to measure out a claim of twenty acres for each one of the party. Stakes were driven at the corners and properly marked, and the next day was spent in prospecting the ground thoroughly. There was just enough of the deposit for each to have a claim of twenty acres, and all about of the same quality.

"We must not forget the rights of Mr. Johnsing in the division of our find," said Prof. Garceau.

"Humph!" ejaculated Pete, "he's got his share with him!"

"Ef thars' ennybody as is goin' ter git er

share in, on this divvy, it must be——” Obadiah’s voice becoming husky, he concluded his sentence with a jerk of his thumb over his shoulder.

“I am not forgetting him, Obed,” continued the professor.

“’Cause ef thar aint’ ernough ter go round, my share goes ter him as ain’t here ter claim it.”

“We have counted him in, Obed, and I shall make it my especial business to hunt up his heirs. He once spoke to me of the death of his father and mother, but there may be brothers and sisters. I will attend to all that.”

“All right purfess’, I’m with ye every time.” Obadiah’s tone was more cheerful than before.

“But, father,” interrupted Leon, “I don’t see a bit of use in our bothering with that crazy man’s share. He has gone off with all he ought to have, and we shall never hear any more of him.”

“We must make an effort. We can never leave him to perish alone. That poor creature may have a family dependent on him in some



remote corner of the earth. You must remember that he has not always been as we have seen him."

"We wouldn't find him if we hunted a month," said Pete.

"I shall never feel satisfied unless I make an effort."

"This fire has burnt all through the mountains and you'll never find a trace of him," reiterated Pete, who had no desire for a further encounter with their quondam prisoner.

"But we shall try, Pete," insisted the professor, "as soon as we are all able to stand the trip."

It was a beautiful spot in which they were encamped. The soldiers amused themselves with hunting and kept the camp supplied with venison and wild mutton, while those on the invalid list killed time at the fine trout stream that flowed into the Gros Ventre just below them. The speckled trout, fried to a turn in the long-handled frying pan, would have tempted an epicure.

At last the day came when they turned back

to search for the demented creature who was nominally in partnership with them in their location.

Obadiah led them back over the trail, now blackened by charred pines and underbrush, to their old camp at the mouth of the gulch in which they had discovered the cave, for, he said:

"Ef we find 'im at all it'll be up thar in his roost erlongside o' his patent waterspout!"

"That shall be the initial point in our search, and if he is not there we must look for him up and down the river," announced the professor.

The cave was found and the second exploration made with much more care than their first, although the party was stronger by ten men.

The forest fires had swept over this part of the mountains, and the interior of the cave had an odor of smoke yet lingering about it.

"I'll bet all my old boots," remarked Obadiah, "thet ef we find Mr. Johnsing in this ere hole, we've got ther job o' plantin' 'im."

"Why, what do you mean, Obed?" asked the professor.

"Jest what I say. Thet poor crazy wouldn't

know no better'n ter make tracks fur this hole, an' ther smoke comin 'in 'ud er choked 'im."

And thus it proved. At the far end of the strange cave they found all that remained of the unfortunate creature. He must have died even as Obadiah had said. The three bags of sapphires were with him, but nothing was found to throw any light on his identity. As Obadiah had predicted, nothing remained for them to do but bury him, which they did before leaving the place.

Obadiah and Pete were sent back to hold the locations, and Prof. Garceau pushed on, together with the boys and the cavalrymen, to Green River City, where he engaged surveyors and sent them with Leon and Percy to make a formal survey of the ground in order to secure title.

In due course of time men were put to work on the ground and a strong camp was built up near the site of their fearful encounter with the Indians.

The sapphire ground proved even more valuable than had been hoped, and an English syn-

dicate of capitalists became interested, formed a company, and purchased all the rights of the locators.

Before his final departure for the east, the professor put it to vote as to the final disposition of the shares of Henry West and the demented creature, in the money received.

"I shall suggest," said he, "that as we have no clue to the identity of Mr. Johnsing, his share shall go to the heirs of Henry West, with his own; that in case we do not succeed in finding any, the money shall be turned over to some institution for the education of Indians, as that seemed to be uppermost in the poor fellow's mind."

"I second ther motion!" exclaimed Obadiah, heartily.

"So do I!" cried Pete, and the boys joined in with their approval.

And so it came about that after months of useless advertising and correspondence, the professor gave up in despair.

Pete took his share in the money and went down to Southern California, and made judi-

cious investments in land; but Obadiah, falling in with old companions of former campaigns, shared his part with them as long as it lasted, and now he is trapping for pelts in the Wind River Mountains, and spinning long yarns of the days when he had so much money that he thought he could never be able to spend it all.

It was from the professor that most of these facts were gleaned, and as evidence of his strenuous efforts to find any trace of Henry West's relatives, before turning over the money as agreed upon, he gave the writer the following letter:

Prof. Garceau,  
Washington, D. C.

My Dear Professor: Yours of recent date received, and in reply will state that it would give me the greatest pleasure to aid you were it in my power.

I have gone over our records most thoroughly and for a period dating much further back than requested, and I fail to find any such name enrolled on our lists of Indian pupils.

It is quite likely that the one referred to by

you may have been here, but if so it was under another name; yet I fail to bring to mind any such character as you describe.

I forwarded your letter to Major D——, who had charge here for some time prior to myself, and he has just written me that he is unable to recall any such pupil as Henry West.

Greatly regretting that I am not able to aid you, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your most obedient servant,

R. W——,

Bvt. Maj. U. S. A.

Carlisle, Penn.,

January —, 18—.

Thus the identity of Henry West must ever remain a mystery, and all that is earthly of that gentle savage rests in a lonely grave on the banks of the Gros Ventre river.















